BUDDHIST HAGIOGRAPHY IN EARLY JAPAN

Images of compassion in the Gyōki tradition

Jonathan Morris Augustine

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LONDON AND NEW YORK

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Hagiography or idealized biographies which recount the lives of saints, bodhisattvas and other charismatic figures have been the meeting place for myth and experience. In medieval Europe, the “lives of saints” were read during liturgical celebrations and the texts themselves were treated as sacred objects. In Japan, it was believed that those who read the biographies of lofty monks would acquire merit. Since hagiography were written or compiled by believers, the line between legendary elements and reality was often obscured. This study of the Bodhisattva Gyōki illustrates how Japanese Buddhist hagiographers chose to regard a single monk’s charitable activities as a miraculous achievement that shaped the course of Japanese history.

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First published 2005
by RoutledgeCurzon
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by RoutledgeCurzon
270 Madison Ave, New York, NY 10016

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005.

RoutledgeCurzon is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN 0-203-00211-3 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN 0–415–32245–6 (Print edition)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am most indebted to Martin Collcutt, who has been my generous advisor throughout this project. His intellectual energy and imagination sustained me over the years and helped me to see the significance of Gyōki's activities beyond the realm of academics. I gratefully acknowledge Jacqueline Stone for saving me from making some serious blunders in the interpretation of Nara Buddhism. Nakai Shinko and Miyagi Yoichiro, who have both written books on Gyōki, have also been extremely kind in offering their insights on the subject.

I'm especially grateful to Yuan Naiying and Tang Haitao for their hospitality, friendship, and encouragement throughout the years. Their intriguing lectures on Chinese literature opened my eyes to the depths of classical literature and history. Stephen Teiser, Peter Brown, and Yoritomi Motohiro have all been most kind in sharing their erudition with me. Several scholars, including Micah Auerbach and Michael Como, have also been generous with their time and patience in reading through drafts and offering helpful insights.

I also thank my parents, Morris and Penelope Augustine, who tirelessly listened to my complaints and helped me persevere. Without their support, I might have pursued an entirely different path. Finally, this project would not even have begun without the unwavering support of my beloved wife, Machi. Her intuition and positive attitude are a constant source of inspiration for me.

INTRODUCTION

The bodhisattva Gyōki in the broader hagiographic context

The last few decades have seen a resurgence of works in English and other European languages that deal with hagiography or the idealized biographies of sacred religious figures. However, similar studies of ancient and medieval collections that narrate the lives of bodhisattvas and Buddhist monks and nuns have not received nearly as much attention in East Asia. Why has this been the case? The first and foremost reason is because, to this very day, the Roman Catholic church uses a judicial process to determine whether a person should be canonized. John Paul II canonized more people than any previous papal authority.[1] Consequently, many scholars have become interested in the formal procedures of canonization.

In Japan there were no parallel formal procedures for designating holy monks and Buddhist ascetics as bodhisattvas. During the Nara (710–784) and Heian (794–1191) periods, the imperial court posthumously awarded certain extraordinary monks the title of *bodhisattva*, but the practice was sporadic, and the criteria for their selection were never specified. The lack of a canonization process in Japanese Buddhism has allowed greater diversity within the bodhisattva tradition. Emperors who devoted themselves to the welfare of the suffering masses, monks who received the bodhisattva precepts, and ascetic monks and celestial deities who embodied wisdom and compassion were all venerated as bodhisattvas.

In their study, *Sainthood: Its Manifestations in World Religions*, Richard Kieckhefer and George Bond suggest a need for a more comparative examination of "sainthood" across religious and academic boundaries.[2] Although the religious ideals of Christian saints are often quite different from those of Buddhist monks who were revered as bodhisattvas in China and Japan, almost every holy person stirs up the

jealousy and suspicion of some religious order or powerful political clique.

The Japanese monk Gyōki, who lived during the eighth century, was surely no exception. Although he appears in more Buddhist hagiographic collections than does almost any other holy person of his age, Gyōki was initially treated as a renegade monk who violated the new religious laws called the *Laws for Monks and Nuns* (*Sōniryō*) that were promulgated by the imperial court at the beginning of the eighth century. If the only sources available were the imperial edicts issued by the Nara court, one might perceive Gyōki as a leader of a subversive cult who gathered people in the streets to cast strange spells and perform bizarre rituals.

However, the imperial history of the Nara period, *Shoku nihongi* (797), compiled some decades after Gyōki's death, also suggests that this independent-minded monk was responding to the dramatic increase in the burdens with which the local peasants and laborers were trying to cope. Detailed descriptions that have survived indicate that during the first half of the eighth century, peasants starved alongside major roads leading to the capital because they were required to submit their produce as taxes to distant locations, often without food to survive their arduous journeys. The new tax codes contained in a body of laws known as the *Ritsuryō* brought governmental regulations into the lives of people who previously had little to do with state authorities. The period in which Gyōki lived was an age of political experimentation, but it was also full of political upheavals, rebellions, and plagues that wiped out over one-third of the recorded population of Japan.

If Gyōki had complied with the regulations set up by the imperial court and obediently remained in his temple to pray for the well-being of the emperor, he would have neglected one of the most esteemed Buddhist principles: compassion for the sufferings of others. With the exception of his younger years, Gyōki seems to have spent all his life building bridges, dikes, irrigation canals, orphanages, road-side shelters, and temples, unlike other Buddhist monks who spent their time studying new doctrines abroad or participating in memorial services and esoteric rituals at court. What is most significant about Gyōki's charitable activities was that for decades he apparently undertook these large-scale construction projects by working with local peasants and powerful clans without the approval or support of the imperial court.

One of the most puzzling activities that has been attributed to Gyōki is his participation in the fund-raising campaign for the Vairocana Buddha statue at the end of his life. The imperial history records that after spending most of his life directing charitable projects while more or less ignoring the state, Gyōki suddenly agreed to play a leading role in collecting funds

to build a giant bronze Buddha image that the emperor hoped to construct. Although the Nara court argued that this was a communal project that would bring merit to all who donated "even a blade of grass or a handful of soil," clear from the very beginning was that this would be a costly imperial project. Some scholars have gone so far as to argue that Gyōki's involvement was a dramatic shift from his policy of noncooperation with the imperial authorities. However, regardless of whether Gyōki's actual participation in this imperial project was significant, in 745 he was awarded the highest rank of the Buddhist monastic establishment: senior primary prelate (*daisōjō*). Four years later, he passed away on Mt. Ikoma surrounded by his disciples who had also been involved in the construction of bridges, orphanages, and practice halls.

This short summarized account is simply one interpretation of the activities of this enigmatic figure. In the earliest hagiographic accounts, Gyōki appears as a wandering shamanic figure who used his superhuman powers (*jinzūriki*) to instruct peasants and unlicensed monks (*shidosō*). For Marxist scholars, such as Fukuoka Takeshi, Gyōki is viewed as a "savior of the people" (*minshū no kyūsaisha*) because he is believed to have spent his entire life trying to "lessen the burdens of the suffering masses."[3] The question that naturally follows is why did this Buddhist monk, who did not leave behind any writings describing the content of his teachings, attract so many hagiographers. And why does he continue to inspire the general populace today even though religion seems to play a minor role in Japanese people's lives?

To understand the agendas of Buddhist hagiographers in early Japan requires a basic comprehension of the developments in Japanese Buddhism during the Asuka and Nara periods (seventh and eighth centuries). Of course, this in itself could take up an entire study, but a few basic points should provide the reader with the foundations necessary for understanding the chapters that follow.

First of all, one needs to recognize that the first powerful clans that actively sponsored Buddhism in Japan during the reign of Empress Suiko (592–628) did not simply promote this foreign religion for their spiritual well-being. Prince Shōtoku, Emperor Tenmu, Emperor Shōmu, and other imperial authorities of the seventh and eighth centuries understood the potential importance of Buddhism as an exotic source of divine protection for the imperial court as well as a symbolic support for political centralization. Although Confucianism was relied upon to define the legal relationship between subjects and their sovereign, Buddhism was supposed to establish the moral guidelines for Japanese officials.

In the last few decades, scholars of early Japanese Buddhism, such as Futaba Kenkō, Sakuma Ryū, Naobayashi Futai, and even scholars of

medieval Japanese Buddhism, such as Matsuo Kenji, have characterized early Buddhism as an exclusive state-sponsored religion that carefully monitored the training and ordination of Buddhist monks.[4] In these authors' views, the construction of Asuka temple marked the beginning of centralization in Japanese Buddhism. By the beginning of the Nara period (early eighth century), official monks, or *kansō,* were perceived by the imperial court as state ritualists whose primary responsibility was to pray and perform rituals for the emperor and well-being of the state. Most works written about Nara Buddhism in Japanese tend to provide an extremely detailed discussion of how Nara officials and high-ranking monks borrowed Sui and Tang Buddhist monastic institutions to create a centralized temple system and a bureaucratic monastic network that helped to govern monks and nuns throughout the provinces.

Although these scholars claim that the efficacious power of Buddhism in Japan was monopolized by the state from its earliest years, neither the Chinese nor Korean courts had managed to suppress the diverse manifestations of "folk Buddhism." With large numbers of highly educated Korean immigrants serving in the Japanese court as bureaucrats and administrators, what seems highly improbable is that their clans had not already begun spreading their Buddhist beliefs at the local level. The last decade or so has witnessed a growing interest in excavating and dating Buddhist statues existing in Japan before the so-called adoption of Buddhism as a "state religion" to prove the prominence of Buddhism outside the Asuka capital.

Although large temple complexes and monastic institutions, such as the "central monastic office" (*sōgō*) and the "three administrators" (*sangō*), were created at the end of the seventh century, their existence does not prove that these networks effectively monitored and controlled the activities of the Buddhist monastic community during the Nara period. Although the primary responsibility of the central monastic office and the three administrators was to make sure that the regulations of the *Sōniryō* were being implemented in the capital and the provinces, numerous entries in the Nara imperial history (*Shoku nihongi*) indicate that Gyōki and other self-ordained monks continued to violate the regulations of the *Sōniryō* and still escaped monastic punishment.[5] As becomes evident in later chapters, the number of these self-ordained monks had become so numerous by the middle of the Nara period that the imperial court had to grant full ordination to some of the older lay monks who cooperated with the state. This move suggests that the imperial court's control over the monastic community was less than complete.

The earlier studies already mentioned have exaggerated and overemphasized the stability and authority of the Nara court and its monastic

establishment. The various accounts of Gyōki are important for modifying the present understanding of early Japanese Buddhism, because his activities show that neither the legal codes nor the newly established Buddhist institutions functioned smoothly. The earlier accounts that portray Gyōki's life are important because they narrate the imperial court's inability to keep monks and nuns subservient to the interests of the state.

The subject matter of Buddhist hagiography

A survey conducted by the Library of Congress back in the 1980s indicates that "biography" was the most popular category of nonfiction in the United States. Richard Hutch argues that regardless of the period and place, the study of "lives" is a religious or devotional act to some extent, because empathetic introspection gets the reader spiritually involved in biographies. "The Greek roots of the word, 'biography,' are *bios* and *graphos*, or 'life' (biological life) and 'writing' respectively. That the life written about and read is truly an embodied one, grounded in human biological processes and mortality, is inescapable and must be taken seriously."[6] Thus, contemporary biography and hagiography written before the advent of the scientific revolution are not entirely different in tone and subject matter from our own modern biography.

The popularity of both the Japanese "biography of lofty monks" (*kōsōden*) and the Christian "lives of saints" (*vitae sanctorum*) from the earliest surviving texts to the medieval period lies in the fact that there was a democratic distribution of "saints" from all walks of life. In Europe, saints came from all regions, and many of them were peasants, merchants, and women, whereas early Japanese hagiography included women and lay believers. The main element that unifies these texts is the conservative ethos of the genre and the rhetorical techniques that sometimes downplayed their differences.

One of the important dicta that hagiographers emphasized is that the pursuit of charitable activities is more important than leading a quiet monastic life. The word *charity* is derived from the Latin "caritas" (literally "love" in the spiritual sense) and its thirteenth century French equivalent "charité." "I call 'charity' the motion of the soul toward the enjoyment of God for His own sake, and the enjoyment of one's self and of one's neighbor for the sake of God," St Augustine explains in his *De doctrina Christiana*. By the time St Thomas Aquinas wrote the *Summa Theologia*, charity signified almsgiving as well as converting those who were "spiritually dead."[7] In Japan, the term *fuse*, which has its roots in the Sanskrit *dhāna*, was one of the six practices (*pāramitās*) that all Buddhist monks and nuns were supposed to perform to attain

enlightenment. More specifically, *fuse* referred to the act of giving food or clothing to buddhas, bodhisattvas, and the poor. The road-side shelters that Gyōki built were called *fuseya* or houses where one performed acts of *fuse.* Charity and *fuse* are derived from different historical traditions and have acquired politically charged connotations, but the concepts are certainly not at odds with each other.

A remarkable theological similarity exists between Christian saints' and bodhisattva monks' motivations for participating in charitable activities. Both Buddhist "compassion" (*jihi*) and Christian "love" (*caritas*) motivated acts of selfless service of others. Gyōki hired destitute laborers to work on construction projects, and Eison and Ninshō, who frequently appear in medieval Buddhist hagiography, fed and sheltered outcasts because they believed that the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī was present among the poor. Similarly, the New Testament introduced the idea that the poor were God's chosen people. It was generally understood in Europe that God had humbled himself to become a poor laborer and wayfarer. As Gregory the Great claimed, "the rich" could atone for their sins by giving alms to "the poor."[8]

Thus, poverty did not always evoke ideas of vulgarity and social disturbance but could be seen as a sign of humility in both the Christian and Buddhist traditions. Many monks and nuns, who are highly regarded in hagiographic texts, are thought to have voluntarily taken the vow of poverty because they believed that it helped them to achieve a higher spiritual existence. Saints needed the poor as much as the poor needed saints for spiritual and material comforts. As Lis and Soly have observed, "the poor were nailed to a cross at the bottom of society. Since they brought about the necessary mediation between this world and the other, their place on earth seemed indispensable."[9]

Popular veneration

One important question that has been informally introduced here is why the hagiographic accounts of Gyōki should interest us today. When one thinks of Japan today, "poverty" and "inequality" are probably not adjectives that immediately come to mind. Yet, when one walks down the streets around the "Dōbutsuen mae" station in Osaka, one cannot avoid bumping into hundreds of homeless people who survive on the crackers and gruel that they receive from the Osaka municipal authorities every day. This same area of Kamagasaki is where approximately one-seventh of Gyōki's facilities are believed to have been built. Even after the passage of 1,200 years, these marginal areas in Japan have remained. Although none of the temples, road-side shelters, and orphanages from

the eighth century stand today, the district retains its original name and is the largest ghetto district in Japan. In 1999, the number of homeless was estimated to be more than 10,000 in the Kamagasaki, Nishinari district. Most of them came to Osaka during the 1970s when the Osaka municipal authorities recruited workers for large-scale construction projects.[10] What is striking about the relief facilities in Kamagasaki is that, with the exception of the local welfare center, the only private facilities that exist are run by Catholic priests and nuns. In recent decades, Gyōki's name is frequently mentioned at religious conferences in an effort to encourage the Buddhist community to take a more active role in social welfare.

Gyōki veneration is not something limited to early and medieval Buddhist hagiography. In the entrance to the Kintetsu line's Nara station stands a statue of Gyōki. In this busiest part of town, the Nara prefectural officials erected the statue and wrote a short account of Gyōki to honor his extraordinary achievements. The statues of Gyōki of various shapes and sizes exist all over the Kansai region. Every year on October 6, the local farmers and residents of the Kishiwada district in Osaka hold the "Gyōki festival" (*Gyōki matsuri*). Young and old men carry colorful floats down the main street until they reach Kumeta temple, located by Lake Kumeta. The crowds offer prayers and incense to the statue of Gyōki that sits in the main hall. Along the lake lie several graves of the highest-ranking courtiers during Gyōki's lifetime, such as Tachibana no Moroe and Empress Kōmyō. According to the *Gyōki Chronology* (*Gyōki nenpu*: 1175), Gyōki and his followers dug this lake back in 734 so that the land could be cultivated.[11] In fact, to this very day, the majority of farms depend on the water of Lake Kumeta for irrigating their rice fields.

The year 1999 marked the 1,250th-year anniversary of Gyōki's death, and symposiums and special exhibits were held throughout Japan to reflect on the monk who started the first major social welfare movement in Japan. Among the charts of bridges, orphanages, and road-side rests attributed to Gyōki and displayed at the exhibit in the Sakai Museum was the stone fragment of the funeral urn discovered by Umehara Suesada in 1915 on an archeological expedition of the area. The inscription on this broken stone fragment matches the oldest surviving copy of the *Gravestone Memorial of the Senior Primary Prelate* (*Daisōjō sharibyōki*) that was composed in 749.[12] Until this discovery, only textual evidence suggested that Gyōki had been a "real historical figure."

New archeological findings are changing the nature of research concerning Gyōki's charitable projects. The *Sequel to the Chronicles of Japan* (*Shoku nihongi*: 797) stated that Gyōki constructed more than forty practice halls and road-side shelters in Settsu, Kawachi, Yamashiro, Izumi,

and Yamato provinces. During the last two decades, archeologists have discovered the remains of at least seven of the forty-nine sites listed in the *Gyōki nenpu* and are learning more about the purpose and the structure of the sites attributed to Gyōki. Thus, researchers are becoming adept at making more accurate speculations about the historicity of Gyōki's activities rather than focusing exclusively on the representation of him as a sage in Buddhist hagiography.

Primary sources

When Japanese scholars discuss the hagiographic accounts of Gyōki, they often categorize them as "tales" (*setsuwa*). The term was invented in the Meiji period (1868–1912) to describe miscellaneous tales that do not belong to the three generic literary genres of courtly romance (*monogatari*), military epic (*gunkimono*), and court diaries (*nikki*).[13] One should avoid using this vague and overlapping category, as each one of the Gyōki accounts have a specific context and purpose. The *Illustrated Text of the Bodhisattva Gyōki* (*Gyōki bosatsu engizu ekotoba*, 1316?), for example, cannot be categorized as *setsuwa*, *monogatari*, or "folktales" (*minwa*). This fifteen-scroll biography was most likely composed to be used in a series of sermons to a group of monks or lay believers and was accompanied by three hanging scrolls that illustrated various scenes from Gyōki's life.[14] The present study will leave questions of categorization aside and concentrate on the function of the various Buddhist hagiography with Gyōki as the central focus.

In the first few chapters, we rely on the official history of the Nara court, *Shoku nihongi*, the *Sōniryō*, and Gyōki's gravestone memorial (*Daisōjō sharibyōki*) to determine how Gyōki's activities violated the regulations that the state had established for the Buddhist monastic community. As monks were viewed as official state ritualists, they were strictly forbidden to interact with the secular world. However, Gyōki ignored these new codes and wandered about begging and preaching to the masses. The *Shoku nihongi* will provide clues as to why Gyōki was not laicized and tried by secular law for his supposed "crimes."

Many Japanese historians, such as Kitayama Shigeo, have viewed the *Shoku nihongi* as the most reliable source for learning about Gyōki's relationship with the Nara court. Although the *Shoku nihongi* is useful for assessing the official perspective on Gyōki, it reflects the political biases of Kanmu's court (r. 781–806). Furthermore, whether the imperial court actually had reliable information about Gyōki's activities is questionable. We must consult temple records and a variety of fragmentary

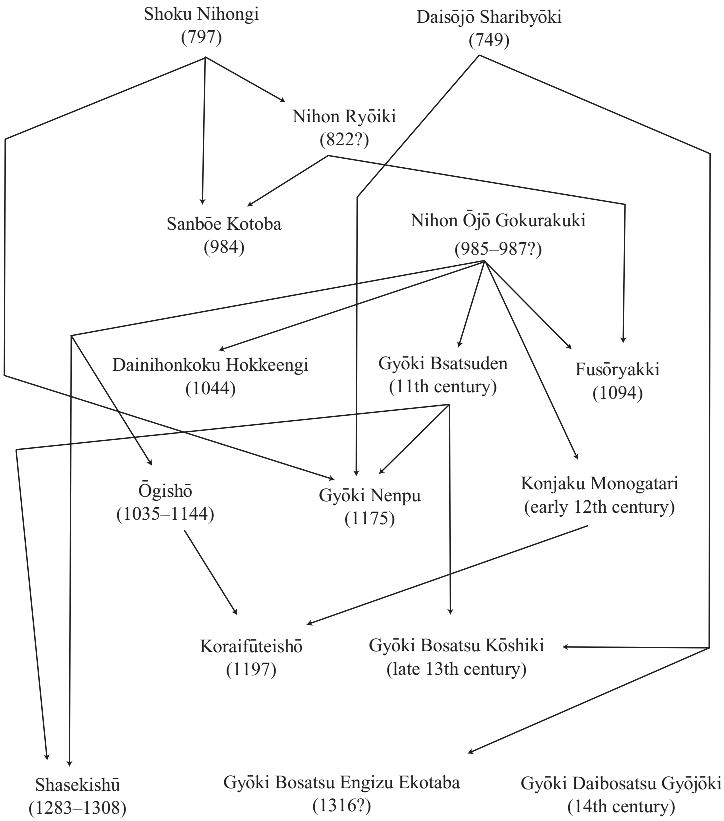


Chart 0.1 The development of Gyōki biographies

texts contained in the *Nara Remnants* (*Nara ibun*) to make a fair assessment of Gyōki's attitude toward the imperial court.

Although numerous legends about Gyōki seem to have been circulating within a few decades after his death, none of the early Heian compilers systematically organized and recorded them.[15] Yoshishige no Yasutane (?–1002) was one of the first monks to pay close attention to Gyōki's background. In his *Accounts of Rebirth into the Pure Land* (*Nihon ōjō gokurakuki*, 985–987?), Gyōki is portrayed as a charismatic monk who cultivated good relations with the Nara court and was awarded the highest monastic rank of the central monastic office at the end of his life. In this text, we consider why Gyōki is included among the hagiographic accounts of monks and holy persons who are thought to have achieved birth into

the Amida Buddha's Pure Land. These hagiographic accounts, which were known as *ōjōden,* showed the accessibility of Pure Land teachings and served as evidence that people in the not-so-distant past had actually been able to enter Amida's Western Paradise.

Although some compilers transformed Gyōki into a Pure Land saint or a poet, other biographers were interested in actually locating the practice halls that he had built and the exact spot where he was buried. A high-ranking official of the Heian court during the twelfth century (called Izumi Kochi) was disturbed by the miserable conditions of Gyōki's temples and road-side shelters, so he personally visited various temples and searched through Heian imperial archives to compile the *Gyōki nenpu*. Why did it take until the twelfth century to compile such a text? This is the only record that lists the locations and the exact dates of all of the construction sites attributed to Gyōki. Because the record was compiled four hundred years after Gyōki's death, we need to verify its historical reliability. Recent archeological findings have confirmed that the locations and dates of at least one-seventh of the sites listed in the *Gyōki nenpu* are accurate.

Organization

In terms of organization, the first part of this study addresses more "historical" questions, such as why Gyōki escaped punishment for violating the *Sōniryō*, how he was involved in the Vairocana project, and why he was accorded the title of *bodhisattva*. The later chapters make use of Gyōki as a popular symbol to highlight the outstanding characteristics of Buddhist hagiography in early Japan. The general focus of these chapters will be on literary and ideological issues, such as how Gyōki was represented in early and medieval hagiography. These sets of questions are not unrelated, because historical issues of Nara and early Heian biographical accounts were still relevant to the medieval hagiographers. Modern academic distinctions between literary and historical materials do not readily apply to medieval texts, such as the *Gyōki nenpu*, because they contain a mixture of historical and legendary material. The *Gyōki nenpu*, for example, records the exact dates and locations of where Gyōki's construction projects were believed to have taken place, but it also describes how an eminent monk called Chikō was punished in hell for slandering Gyōki. An important factor to keep in mind is that Gyōki seems to have been already a legend during his own lifetime, and even the officials who compiled the first official account were not able to disentangle the legendary elements from the more factual accounts.

In Chapter 1, we examine how the received biography of Gyōki that appears in textbooks, encyclopedias, and full-length studies has been constructed over the centuries. The most current studies on Gyōki have added new layers of dimension to the old myths and legends because scholarly understanding of early Japanese Buddhism has been revised in recent decades. In Chapter 2, we explore the existence of basically three kinds of texts that mention or discuss Gyōki. They include official histories from the Nara and Heian periods, the Buddhist hagiography of monks and nuns from the late Heian to the early Kamakura period, and later medieval accounts that were often more detailed than the official histories in recording the exact dates and locations of Gyōki's construction projects.

Any work that examines the historicity of Gyōki must confront the issue of how Gyōki violated the *Sōniryō* and why he escaped punishment, because these questions have received the most attention in the official histories. However, this is more complicated than it seems, because only the Nara imperial history, *Commentary on the Civil Regulations* (*Ryō no shūge*), and a few other fragmentary texts state that Gyōki "deceived the masses" through his preaching and displayed "suspicious behavior." The extent to which Gyōki's experience with the imperial court and the central monastic office was representative of Buddhist monks who committed similar crimes during the Nara period should also be assessed.

Another important question to consider is whether Gyōki's movement can be considered an effort to relieve the suffering caused by the state's efforts to implement a systematic tribute and corveé labor system. Fujiwara Fuhito (659–720), who ordered the construction of the Heijō capital in 708, had spent his entire life compiling a set of legal codes, known as the *Ritsuryō*. The new capital was meant to be the testing ground for these laws. However, within a decade after the implementation of this new legal system, a huge pestilence struck the country, and the peasants experienced extreme difficulty in having to drag their grain and regional produce to the capital, as the road conditions were still inadequate. The *Shoku nihongi* account of Gyōki states that "he personally led his disciples to treacherous spots and built bridges and dikes" (*Shoku nihongi*: 02/749). The political implications of Gyōki's construction projects must be discussed further.

One of the activities that almost every study mentions is Gyōki's involvement in the fund-raising campaign for the huge bronze Vairocana Buddha image that Emperor Shōmu had proposed to build in 743. We must examine why this issue has received so much attention, considering that very seldom do early and medieval hagiographic accounts actually mention it. Most sources suggest that Gyōki's relationship with the imperial court involved far more than raising funds to build the enormous

Buddha image. As Chiyoda Izuru claims, Gyōki was most active in his charitable projects when the Nara court was trying to cope with a series of political disasters, such as rebellions and great epidemics.[16] Thus, Chapter 4 also focuses on Gyōki's response to the various calamities that Emperor Shōmu faced toward the middle of the eighth century.

Some scholars of Buddhist hagiography, such as Miyagi Yōichirō, have portrayed Gyōki as an historical anomaly, as no leaders or historical and legendary figures in Japanese Buddhist hagiography managed to mobilize people from so many provinces to work on temples, orphanages, bridges, dikes, and other irrigation projects. Admittedly, Gyōki's projects seem to have been carried out on an unprecedented scale, but he was not the first Buddhist monk in Japan to teach the merit of "charitable works." Chapter 5 investigates which monks or texts might have inspired Gyōki into devoting his life to charitable projects. The investigation is not limited to Gyōki's Hossō mentors, such as Dōshō, who were also involved in a number of construction projects. We will also examine religious commentaries and continental figures from the seventh and eighth centuries who advocated that every monk should take part in charitable activities.

Chapter 6 relies on the largest and most diverse body of texts, because we will examine the development of Gyōki biographies from the Heian through the medieval periods. The *Miraculous Tales of Ancient Japan* (*Nihon ryōiki*), which was compiled by a monk named Kyōkai in the early ninth century, depicts Gyōki in seven separate tales as an ascetic monk with magical powers. Tada Isshin has pointed out that Gyōki appears in more tales than any other monk or emperor in the *Nihon ryōiki*. In most of the tales, Gyōki is referred to as a living bodhisattva (*bosatsu*) or an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī (*Monju bosatsu*). How were monks designated as bodhisattvas during the Nara and early Heian periods, and how did Gyōki's reputation as a bodhisattva evolve?

Oddly enough, in one period Gyōki seems to have been ignored by the entire monastic community. Although Gyōki appears in some tales in the *Nihon ryōiki* and Saichō briefly mentions Gyōki's forty-nine construction sites in his *Kenkairon* (820),[17] generally speaking, little attention was devoted to Gyōki's achievements during the first two hundred years after his death. However, from the late Heian period, numerous monks began compiling the account of his life, and a rising interest centered on identifying the bridges, temples, and shelters that he built back in the eighth century. The factors that might have contributed to the medieval revival of Gyōki biographies are also examined in the final chapter. This study focuses on the representations or the "images" of Gyōki over the ages rather than focusing exclusively on reconstructing the actual historical figure of the eighth century.

1

THE RECEIVED BIOGRAPHY OF GYŌKI

In the last three decades, several studies have focused on Gyōki and the early Buddhist monastic establishment. However, until Inoue Kaoru's study entitled *Gyōki* appeared in 1959, no scholarly works narrated Gyōki's life.[1] Inoue's classic addressed some of the fundamental questions that would be considered in subsequent studies, such as the scale of Gyōki's charitable projects and why the imperial court seemed to have altered its confrontational policy toward this rebellious monk in the middle of the eighth century. Although more recent studies have dealt with these issues, they are by no means fully resolved.

Gyōki's initial attraction for the earliest compilers may have been the enormous number of temples, orphanages, road-side shelters, bridges, and irrigation canals that were attributed to him. Even the courtiers of the new Heian capital would have been aware of Gyōki's reputation, as he was one of the six monks whose biography was included in the Nara official history (*Shoku nihongi*). A comparison of Gyōki to the accounts by Dōshō (629–700), Dōji (?–744), Genbō (?–746), Ganjin (687–763), and Dōkyō (?–772) makes clear that Gyōki alone spent most of his active years without either the interference or support from the Nara court and the Buddhist monastic establishment. Another factor that distinguishes Gyōki from the rest of these eminent monks is that until he was appointed to the senior primary prelate (*daisōjō*), he did not have any official rank or title. In fact, some medieval hagiography even questions whether he was fully ordained.

The received biography of Gyōki that appears in encyclopedias, textbooks, and biographical studies is made up of several key elements. They include (1) Gyōki's Korean ancestral background, (2) his ordination and precarious status as a partially ordained monk (*shami*), (3) his mountain asceticism and violation of the laws established by the imperial court for Buddhist monks and nuns, (4) his participation in charitable activities, including the Vairocana fund-raising campaign, and (5) his receipt of the highest title in the Buddhist monastic establishment. Interestingly enough,

most of these elements were discussed in far more detail in medieval Buddhist hagiography than in the earliest accounts on Gyōki. Why was this the case? By tracing the legendary and historical events of Gyōki's life side by side, we can get a glimpse into how modern scholars have projected their own values onto this historical figure.

During the last three or four decades, scholars have viewed Gyōki as a renegade monk who was immensely popular among self-ordained monks and lay believers. Nomura Tadao has argued that Gyōki's popular movement threatened the foundations of the newly established Buddhist institutions, as he blatantly ignored regulations of the *Laws for Monks and Nuns* (*Sōniryō*) and yet escaped punishment.[2] Other historians, such as Miyagi Yōichirō, claim that Gyōki was defying the *Ritsuryō* state, because the imperial court had enforced many oppressive land reforms.[3] Yet, the only primary text that suggests the state's opposition to Gyōki's movement is the *Sequel to the Chronicles of Japan* (*Shoku nihongi*), which is not always consistent with regard to its policies toward Gyōki. An examination of early Heian commentaries, such as the *Commentaries on the Civil Statutes* (*Ryō no shūge*), and of the official histories will clarify the imperial court's ambivalence toward Gyōki.

Yoshida Yasuo, in *Gyōki to ritsuryō kokka*, took a new approach by investigating Chinese Buddhist figures and texts that might have inspired Gyōki in his charitable activities.[4] Nakai Shinkō addressed the same topic in *Gyōki to kodai bukkyō*. He traced Gyōki's inspiration for charitable projects to popular sutras that were brought over to Japan at the beginning of the eighth century.[5] In some of his works, Nakai even considered the activities of Gyōki's most famous disciples and examined how monks who lived several decades after Gyōki's death perceived and imitated his projects.[6] Nakai's research has increased scholars' critical awareness of the hagiographic accounts by pointing out the difference in perspective between the official histories, miraculous tales, and the shorter biographies on Gyōki that were compiled by Buddhist monks during the medieval period.

Western scholarship

Despite Gyōki's popularity in Japan, no Western scholar has dedicated an article or a full work to examining the significance of this enigmatic figure. This is partly due to a shortage of works that introduce early Japanese Buddhism to the Western audience. In recent years, Joan Piggott is probably the only scholar who has written full-length works on early Japanese Buddhism. Her doctoral dissertation, "Tōdaiji and Nara Imperium" provided the first English translation of the *Sōniryō*. Her most recent book, titled *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship*, contains a

detailed analysis of how the Nara court intended the regulations to be a control mechanism over the monastic community. For those who are interested in early Buddhism in Japan, her work is of considerable importance because it introduces the manner in which new Buddhist institutions, such as provincial monasteries and nunneries (*kokubunji* and *kokubunniji*, respectively) and the five lineages (*shū*), were established by the imperial court. Her impressive final chapter, which explains that the expanded ritual program of Emperor Shōmu was an attempt to establish the transcendental primacy of the Japanese emperor, has been a useful reference for examining Gyōki's relation to the Nara court.[7]

Abe Ryūichi's *The Weaving of Mantra* includes a brief section on Gyōki's association with *shidosō* or monks who proclaimed themselves to be ordained Buddhist priests without having undergone the official ordination process.[8] His earlier chapters, which explain that the Asuka and Nara courts promoted Confucianism as a ruling ideology to legitimize the emperor's rule, are useful for understanding the complex dynamics of Nara Buddhism. Abe views the high-ranking bureaucrats of the late seventh and eighth centuries as "literati-officials" because many of them were trained in the Confucianism curriculum. "These officials treated the Buddhist clergy as if it were a government bureaucracy subordinate to their own, in accordance with a division of the ritsyuryō, termed the *Sōniryō*, or Rules for Priests and Nuns."[9]

A review of the limited Western scholarship on the subject renders evident that too much emphasis has been placed on the newly created Buddhist institutions of the Asuka and Nara period and not enough attention has been devoted to whether the centralized monastic establishment and the imperial court were actually able to enforce the new monastic regulations. Gyōki's movement provides a useful lens through which to look into many of the problems that the highest-ranking authorities dealt with. As for the Japanese scholarship, although most incidents associated with Gyōki have been brought up, a tendency remains to mix the official histories and fragmentary records with medieval hagiography to create their own legendary narratives of Gyōki's life. As each text has distinct and separate agendas, chronologically examining how the images of Gyōki were gradually transformed over time would be more appropriate.

Ancestral background

The Gravestone Memorial of the Senior Primary Prelate (Daisōjō sharibyōki), which was composed by Gyōki's disciple, Shinsei, is a good starting point for our discussion, because it records the oldest and most concise account of Gyōki's life.

Daisōjō sharibyōki:

> Gyōki's ordained name was Hōgyō, but he was better known as Gyōki before he became associated with Yakushi temple.[10] His family name before ordination was Koshi. His father, Saichi, was descended from the Paekche prince Wani. His mother was the eldest daughter of Hachida no Torami, who resided in Ōtori district, Kawachi province, and was also known as Konihime.[11] Gyōki was born in Ōtori district in the seventh year of Emperor Tenji's reign (668).[12] In the eleventh year of Tenmu's reign (682), he took vows and entered the Buddhist path. He engaged in ascetic activities such as fasting, but never failed to instruct people. As a result, people praised him for his mercy and called him "bodhisattva." All people from the highest ranks to commoners gathered to worship him, so wherever he went, it seemed like a market place. Eventually the imperial court recognized Gyōki's greatness and allowed monks to be converted.[13] In the year 745, the court specially granted Gyōki the rank of senior primary prelate (*daisōjō*) and awarded him one hundred *kō* of land. At that time, the central monastic office (*sōgō*) had already been established. Gyōki's position was higher than any of the eminent monks, but he did not put on airs and continued to devote himself to his work. Finally, at the age of eighty-two during the second day of the second month in 749, he suddenly passed away at Sugawara temple while laying on his right side chanting sutras as usual.[14] On the eighth day of the second month, his body was cremated in accordance with his will on the eastern hill of Mt. Ikoma in Heguri district, Yamato Province. His disciple, Keisei, cried out loud and looked toward the sky, but there was no sign [of his master.] All that remained was his scattered bones and some ashes. So the disciples put [the bones] inside a box and paid their respects. Then they climbed to the top of [Mt. Ikoma] and buried his remains.
>
> 03/23/749: Shamon Shinsei[15]

When one examines this earliest account of Gyōki, which is rather dry and difficult to render into English, how many events that scholars commonly associate with Gyōki today are missing or perhaps deliberately omitted becomes evident. The brevity of the account may puzzle readers who are aware of Gyōki's significance in the history of early Japanese Buddhism. Dedicating a third of a memorial to ancestral lineage is certainly against modern sensibility. Perhaps, some may even simply

consider the *Daisōjō sharibyōki* to be a genealogical text. Nevertheless, in an age when Buddhism was still very much a religion dominated by the imperial court, establishing that Gyōki's ancestors came from a noble lineage was important. Inoue Kaoru has confirmed that both Gyōki's parents listed in the *Daisōjō sharibyōki* were descended from Korean immigrant families, who played some important roles at court a century before Gyōki's birth. His father's side of the family had worked closely with the Soga clan, who later became instrumental in persuading the emperor to adopt Buddhism as a state-sponsored religion. A more distant branch of the family, known as Fumi, was related to Gyōki's Buddhist master, Dōshō, who brought back numerous sutras from China. Dōshō's ancestors were believed to have built a clan temple, called *Yachūji*. Chiyoda Izuru claims that, on the basis of old maps and archeological evidence, this temple was located no more than twelve kilometers east of Gyōki's birthplace.[16] A major road called *Tajihimichi*, which still exists today (Takeuchi Kaidō), passed by Gyōki's birthplace and a cluster of Buddhist temples. The most politically active role that the Fumi family played during Gyōki's childhood was participating in a succession dispute known as the Jinshin War (672). Fortunately, Fumi no Obito and Fumi no Atai fought for Prince Ōama, who won the war and declared himself emperor in 672, so the Fumi family and their relatives were able to maintain a middle-rank status in the new emperor's court.[17]

The *Daisōjō sharibyōki* also states that Gyōki was born on his mother's estate, which was not an unusual family practice during the Asuka period. Chiyoda explains that several Korean immigrant families were living in this valley, which was located near Emperor Nintoku's mausoleum. Thus, not surprisingly, Gyōki's disciple Shinsei, who composed Gyōki's gravestone memorial, states that Gyōki was descended from the famous Korean Paekche prince Wani. *The Chronicles of Japan* (*Nihon shoki*) first mentions Wani in the fifteenth year of Emperor Ōjin's reign (early fifth century) when the emperor received a series of gifts from the Paekche king. When Ōjin asked one of the envoys whether any exceptional scholars of classical Chinese were living in Paekche, a Korean official who was called *Achiki* in the Yamato court mentioned Wani. So a year later, Ōjin sent Yamato envoys to Paekche to invite Wani. Consequently, Wani was said to have traveled to Yamato and agreed to become the personal tutor to the emperor's son. In return for those services, Emperor Ōjin granted Wani many honors and the surname Fumi. The *Records of Ancient Matters* (*Kojiki*) also claims that Wani was the first person to introduce Confucious' *Analects* (*Lunyu*) to the Yamato court.

However, regardless of whether Gyōki's distant ancestors were actually descended from this prestigious Paekche scholar, his parents' official

background gave him special opportunities to receive an education in a Buddhist temple. Commoners and officials residing outside the capital and its neighboring provinces could not be ordained or even become novices.[18] Toward the end of the eighth century, the imperial court was in the process of establishing a more efficient state-regulated Buddhist monastic network. In the tenth month of 679, Emperor Tenmu issued an imperial edict in which he ordered all Buddhist monks and nuns to stay in their temples to protect the three treasures. Two years later, in the second month of 681, a committee of officials began compiling new rules and regulations for the *Kiyomigahara* codes, which would place the monastic community under increased surveillance (*Nihon shoki*: 02/681).[19] Under such conditions, ordained monks certainly attracted considerable attention from the imperial court.

Ordination

If a person desired to become a monk or a nun during the latter half of the seventh century, he or she would first have to obtain permission from the highest temple authorities. In Gyōki's case, his proximity to several Buddhist temples and his clan's ties to the official Buddhist network probably gave him the opportunity to receive preliminary vows. Many of the well-known monks of the Asuka-Nara periods were also descended from middle-rank Korean immigrant families, such as Jikun (Fumi clan, 691–773), Giin (Ichiki clan, ?–728), Dōji (Nukada clan, ?–744), Rōben (Kudara clan, 689–773), and Dōshō (Fumi clan, 629–700). As Inoue Kaoru suggests, becoming a monk provided much more than an opportunity to engage in study and quiet contemplation.[20] One could get a chance to study in China and Korea, as many of the monks mentioned earlier did, and in some cases one could even get to know high-ranking courtiers.

According to the *Daisōjō sharibyōki*, when Gyōki took his vows at age fifteen (682),[21] the Asuka court was in the process of establishing a system that would limit the number of candidates for full ordination. As Joan Piggott has pointed out, "The Capital Office (*Kyōshiki*) and provincial governors kept records of monks' names, their scholarly specialties, and dates of entrance into the monastic order."[22] This was done primarily because the court wanted to prevent people from taking vows simply to avoid their tax and corveé labor duties. For a person to become a monk or a nun, he or she first had to take the preliminary vows of the novice (*tokudo*). At the end of the Asuka period, the court sporadically allowed large groups of aspirants to be ordained. The *Nihon shoki* records numerous instances in which aspirants received their preliminary

vows at major temples after the death of a high-ranking courtier or when special ceremonies were performed at court.

> 11/12/680: 100 aspirants were ordained when Empress Jitō became ill.
>
> 11/26/680: 100 aspirants were ordained when Emperor Tenmu became ill.
>
> 08/29/682: 140 aspirants were ordained at major temples due to Princess Hidaka's illness.
>
> Summer/682: 30 aspirants, who were performing rituals inside the imperial palace during rainy season, were ordained.
>
> 03/06/686: 3 men were chosen to be ordained when Mata no Mahito became ill.
>
> 07/28/686: 30 practitioners were ordained during a fasting ritual.
>
> 08/01/686: 80 aspirants were ordained during the emperor's illness.
>
> 08/02/686: 100 men and women were ordained.

Although not all these entries are clear about the exact circumstances surrounding each of the ordinations, in about one-half of the cases, the imperial court seems to have ordained monks in hopes of curing illnesses of dying courtiers. Thus, aspirants who hoped to be ordained during the Asuka period had to reside near the capital and enjoy close ties with the imperial court.

In 12/01/691, the Asuka court finally established the precedent of ordaining every year ten aspirants who had engaged in ascetic activities. This practice eventually developed into the yearly ordinand system that the Heian court adopted in the ninth century.[23] The tasks that these aspirants were required to perform were reading and explaining parts of the *Golden Light Sutra* (*Jinguangmin jing*) during the twelfth month of the year. The *Daisōjō sharibyōki* states that Gyōki took his preliminary vows in 682, so he may have been one of the 140 monks ordained when Princess Hidaka became ill.[24]

When Gyōki was ordained, the practice of calling aspirants who had received preliminary vows *shami* and honoring monks who had completed their training with the *gusokukai* was not yet firmly established.[25] At the end of the sixth century, several Japanese monks were sent to Paekche to receive the equivalent of the *gusokukai* precepts, because nobody in Yamato was qualified to administer them (*Nihon shoki*: 587). Very few

entries in the *Nihon shoki* during first half of the seventh century mention the names of fully ordained monks, even though numerous accounts of *tokudo* exist. *Shami* were supposed to spend several years studying and engaging in ascetic activities before they could receive their final vows at Asuka or Yakushi temple. Although Gyōki's gravestone memorial is not clear about whether he received his final vows or not, medieval biographers state that he received his full vows a decade or two after his *tokudo*.[26]

Gyōki does not easily fit the image of an official monk, because he was ordained before the "monastic certification" (*kugen*) system had been firmly established. The *Sōniryō* and the *Shoku nihongi* explain that the council of state began issuing certifications to Buddhist aspirants who hoped eventually to receive their final vows.[27] *Kugen* divided monks into three categories: those who had taken preliminary vows (*shodo*), those who received the final vows (*jukai*), and teachers authorized to administer vows and instruct novices (*shii*). However, as seen in Chapter 3, this system did not always prevent monks from selling their *kugen* or making counterfeits. If one of the purposes for creating these certificates was to identify the self-ordained monks (*shidosō*), then what happened to monks such as Gyōki, who received their preliminary vows before the *kugen* system was created?

Conceivably, these older monks might have been falsely identified as self-ordained monks if they did not reside in one of the major official temples when *kugen* were issued.[28] Both the *Biography of the Bodhisattva Gyōki* (*Gyōki bosatsuden*) and the *Chronological Record of Gyōki* (*Gyōki nenpu*) explain that Gyōki spent many years performing various ascetic activities, but the earliest *Sharibyōki* only makes a vague reference to fasting during this period. The eleventh-century *Gyōki bosatsuden* states that Gyōki resided in the mountains for a decade and received his final vows at Takayama temple from a Buddhist master (*zenshi*) called Tokukō.[29] Takayama temple was located within the Katsuragi mountains, where the famous En no gyōja was thought to have performed various austerities. No precedents existed during this period for holding *jukai* ordinations outside the most important temples, such as Asuka temple and Yakushi temple, so the *Gyōki bosatsuden* account may be anachronistic.

The *Gyōki nenpu* also discusses Gyōki's mountain asceticism and explains that he remained in the vicinity of Ikoma mountains until he was forty.[30] This suggests that Gyōki may have received his final vows while he was training in the mountains, but the Nara court did not recognize his ordination, because he did not receive his final vows in one of the major temples. After all, even the earliest tale collections, such as

the *Miraculous Tales of Ancient Japan* (*Nihon ryōiki*), refer to him as a *shami* rather than a *biku*, so possibly Gyōki's full ordination took place in a more remote temple.

In a decade or two after Gyōki took his vows, the Nara court started defining specific requirements for those seeking ordination. The council of state issued an edict recorded in the *Shoku nihongi,* which explains that all aspirants who desire to receive the preliminary vows must at least have engaged in three years of ascetic training and be able to recite and explain several passages from the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Golden Sutra of the Triumphant King* (*Zuishangwang jing*).[31] The very limited texts that recorded the qualifications of monks and nuns prior to their ordination show that those who were older than twenty years had engaged in several years of ascetic training prior to receiving their final vows. For example, a text called the *Records of the Laymen's Offerings* (*Ubasoku kōshinbun*) recorded the backgrounds and abilities of individual monks, so that monastic authorities could determine whether they were qualified enough to receive their preliminary vows. The entries dating between 732 and 748 show that more than one-half of the aspirants were men who resided outside the capital and in nearby provinces (*keiki*).[32] The Nara court probably had to evaluate these provincial aspirants on an individual basis, as they were not supervised by Buddhist authorities from the major temples. Among the ninety-five monks listed in the *Ubasoku kōshinbun*, almost every one had spent at least four years engaged in ascetic training, and some had spent even more than twenty years before receiving preliminary vows. However, with regard to the names of the sutras that these aspirants could recite, many of them listed nothing.

Gyōki's education and mountain asceticism

The various hagiographic accounts have left many unanswered questions and issues about what Gyōki did between his ordination at age fifteen and the beginning of his construction projects in his early forties. Gyōki's biography in the *Shoku nihongi* states that he studied the consciousness-only doctrine of the Yogācāra school in his younger years and thoroughly understood their teachings (*Shoku nihongi*: 02/749). These were texts essential for all Hossō monks who wanted to investigate the nature and phenomenal manifestation of all existence.

Gyōki is frequently associated with Dōshō because Dōshō was the head of the Hossō school when Gyōki studied these doctrines. Dōshō was one of the first monks in the six national histories (*rikkokushi*) whose participation in the construction of bridges and ports is recorded. He had traveled to China in 653 to study with the eminent monk, Xuanzang

(602–664). After living and studying with the great master until 661, he returned to Japan and set up a meditation hall at the eastern corner of Asuka temple, where he instructed monks and nuns for the rest of his life.[33] Dōshō received the highest monastic rank of *daisōzu* around the same time Gyōki supposedly received his final vows, so the extent to which the two interacted is not clear. The *Gyōki bosatsuden* casts further doubt onto their relation by stating that Gyōki spent most of his time after receiving his vows performing austerities in the mountains.

Although when Gyōki was ordained the Nara court had not yet promulgated the edict requiring every ordained monk to belong to a Buddhist school, Emperor Tenmu's edict of 679 made clear that monks were not permitted to abandon their study and roam around alone in the mountains. The medieval *Gyōki bosatsuden* and the *Gyōki nenpu* developed earlier narratives of Gyōki's austerities by adding that he moved his sick mother to a quiet hut in the Ikoma mountains and took care of her until she passed away. Scholars such as Yoshida Yasuo have interpreted Gyōki's dedication to his mother in the mountains as a contemplative period in his life in which he developed values that separated himself from the official monastic establishment.[34] Yoshida Yasuo even goes so far as to argue that Gyōki's mother's death triggered him to abandon his scholarly life as a Hossō monk and pursue the path of charity. However, the detailed accounts of the *Gyōki nenpu* explain that Gyōki was simultaneously involved in rebuilding his parents' former residence into a Buddhist temple (Ebara temple), constructing a temple not far from the Ikoma hills, and traveling around the provinces. Although Yoshida's theory is interesting, one cannot point to a single incident in hopes of explaining Gyōki's gradual separation from the mainstream monastic community. As we see in later chapters, Gyōki certainly was not the only one who was involved in ascetic activities that might have led him to abandon his monastic life.

The Imperial edict against Gyōki

Although the beginning of Gyōki's preaching and construction projects may have been less dramatic than previous scholars have argued, it certainly involved enough people to draw the imperial court's attention. Gyōki's descent from the Ikoma mountains could be understood as a major transition from an eremitic lifestyle to a more urban movement involving many monks and lay people. The imperial warning of 717 certainly gives the impression that Gyōki was causing a commotion in urban areas. The *Shoku nihongi* edict accused Gyōki of forming unruly cliques in the streets and inciting commoners to participate in bizarre rituals.

This sudden appearance of Gyōki in the Nara court's official history should make one aware how much information is missing in the earliest Gyōki narratives regarding his activities after leaving the Ikoma mountain area. The edict of 717 leaves us with numerous questions that are difficult to answer. When did Gyōki acquire a group of followers? Where did Gyōki conduct these "reprehensible activities?" If we follow Chiyoda Izuru's analysis, after his mother's death, Gyōki descended into the new Heijō capital that was still under construction. Although the courtiers had moved into the Heijō capital in 708, the construction was far from over, and laborers from the most distant provinces were forced to participate. The sixty-day corveé labor duty (*zōyō*) was required of every male in a household between the ages of twenty-one to sixty. However, because the construction of the Heijō capital dragged on for many years, laborers may have been forced to work for many more months.

By 711, peasants were beginning to abandon their forced labor. The *Shoku nihongi* entry describes how laborers from various provinces became fatigued and ran away despite the state's efforts to force them to stay until the construction of the capital was complete. The new *Ritsuryō* codes stipulated that deserters would be severely punished if they were caught.

Inoue Kaoru's classic interpretation of Gyōki's activities, which has been taken up by numerous scholars, is that he witnessed at first hand the sufferings that the imperial construction projects were causing and began preaching to the disillusioned laborers.[35] Once his preaching started gaining momentum, the Nara authorities could no longer ignore him, because his activities violated some of the fundamental responsibilities for monks and nuns that the state was trying to impose on the monastic community. What is particularly interesting about the foregoing *Shoku nihongi* edict is that it is composed of terms and phrases taken from the *Sōniryō*. Not coincidentally are the crimes listed in article five of the *Sōniryō* used as a basis for the imperial court's accusations. "Monks and nuns who reside outside of temples, build practice halls (*dōjō*), gather and teach the masses, those who falsely claim that there is profit in crime and individuals who harass their monastic superiors shall all be laicized."[36]

As a monk who had received his formal education in the Asuka temple, Gyōki was probably familiar with the twenty-seven articles of the *Sōniryō*, which were first presented and explained to a group of monks at Daian temple in 701. These regulations made it clear to monks and nuns that they would lose their privileged status as state ritualists if they became involved in secular matters.

Such scholars as Nemoto Seiji and Nakai Shinkō, who have examined the punishments for all the violations of the *Sōniryō* that Gyōki and his

followers committed, conclude that penalties for each of the crimes that they committed range from one hundred days of monastic labor to trial by secular law in addition to laicization.[37] However, only one medieval text actually explains that Gyōki was punished for his violations.

Did Gyōki and his followers "stop deceiving" the masses after they received a warning from the imperial court? The question is still very much up for debate. Nakai Shinkō argued that the 717 edict was not just directed against Gyōki and his small group of followers. The Nara court certainly had enough strength and authority to lock up or laicize any monk they desired. However, numerous other entries in the *Shoku nihongi* show that the imperial court continued to warn monks and nuns against casting spells, preaching, and gathering the masses to pray for the spirits of the deceased (*Shoku nihongi*: 07/10/722; 04/03/729; 09/29/730). So we can safely assume that the Nara court was coping with the problem on a much larger scale. Nakai argued that the imperial court hoped to warn rebellious monks by targeting Gyōki, who was apparently well-known by 717.[38] However, their efforts seem to have been largely unsuccessful because renegade monks continued to disturb the court during the following decades.

Yoshida Yasuo, nevertheless, argues that the court's edict against Gyōki had a real effect, because it changed the nature of his activities from preaching to building relief facilities that could physically benefit peasants who had to drag their produce to the capital and provincial headquarters.[39] However, one must be cautious with theories that suggest any kind of sudden or dramatic change in Gyōki's activities, because neither the imperial histories nor the earliest hagiography suggest it. In the twelfth century, the *Gyōki nenpu* added a new dimension to earlier hagiography by explaining that Gyōki had already begun constructing practice halls before the Nara court issued its warning. According to Izumi Kochi's view, the Nara court had already been aware that Gyōki was building practice halls, but they objected more to his preaching and interacting with the masses.

An examination of the locations of the first few facilities that Gyōki built renders evident that they were mostly located in mountainous areas not far from Mt Ikoma, where he supposedly took care of his dying mother. Therefore it certainly is conceivable that Gyōki and his group of followers built practice halls in the Heguri and Soeshimo districts where they would be close enough to the capital to preach to the peasants, but far away enough to escape to the mountains to engage in asceticism. Yoshida Yasuo points out that according to *Gyōki nenpu,* the Ryūfuku-in was built in 718 in the Soeshimo district, Tomi village. This was right near an important mountain path known today as

Kuragarigoe tōge, which used to be a major road connecting the city of Naniwa to the new Heijō capital.[40] Also certainly possible is that Gyōki and his followers used practice halls, such as Ryūfuku-in, as a convenient base for preaching to the laborers and peasants who went back and forth between the old and new capitals.

Gyōki's construction projects

Generalizing about Gyōki's construction projects is extremely difficult because the hagiographic accounts provide little information except for the *Gyōki nenpu*. The imperial histories generally agree that Gyōki's involvement in various construction projects coincided with the dramatic increase in the number of peasants who were being forced to submit their taxes to the capital and participate in heavy corveé labor. Gyōki seems to have temporarily moved away from Yamato province, where the Heijō capital was located, owing to the Nara court's condemnation. However, during the next three decades or so, he expanded his construction projects to include bridges, ports, dams, reservoirs, and orphanages. The eight *fuseya* or road-side shelters that are listed in the *Records from the Thirteenth Year of the Tempyō Era* (*Tempyō jūsanneki*: mid-eighth century) might have been Gyōki's response to the state's failure to provide suitable lodges and inns for weary laborers and peasants.[41]

Gyōki's persistence in building facilities that actually helped the state's infrastructure made the highest-ranking officials eventually change their policy. In 731, the Nara court issued an edict granting laymen (*ubasoku*) older than sixty-one and laywomen (*ubai*) older than fifty-five, who had worked together with Gyōki, permission to receive ordination (*Shoku nihongi*: 08/731). The full implications of this edict are discussed in Chapter 4, but allowing the oldest members of Gyōki's disciples to become fully ordained was the state's way of partially recognizing the legitimacy of Gyōki's charitable movement. The 731 edict actually showed some respect toward Gyōki by referring to him as "dharma master" (*hōshi*), even though the Nara court had ridiculed him in 717 as a "small monk" (*kosō*). One might think that the imperial court's change in policy toward Gyōki may have occurred because Gyōki heeded the warnings contained in the imperial edict of 717 and eventually reformed the nature of his activities. However, the *Tempyō jūsannenki* and the official history of the Nara period suggest that Gyōki continued his construction projects into the later years of his life. Even the earliest accounts of Gyōki contained in the *Nihon ryōiki*, which tend to ignore the historical context of his activities, depict him preaching to large crowds at Gangō temple and Naniwa.[42]

While Gyōki continued to work with powerful clans and peasants to build facilities that alleviated the burdens of the local populace, the Nara court faced a series of unexpected disasters. A terrible epidemic that was reported in Kyushu rapidly spread north and wiped out a large proportion of the population in the Heijō capital in 735. In a matter of months, many of the highest-ranking members of the council of state passed away, so the Nara court could not conduct its official business. Emperor Shōmu, who somehow managed to survive the pestilence, exempted the local peasants from their tax and corveé labor duties and ordered all official monks throughout the provinces to copy sutras and pray to the various Buddhist deities.

During the next decade, the imperial court seems to have changed its policy from passively allowing Gyōki to carry on with his projects to being an active sponsor. The *Gyōki nenpu* and the *Gyōki bosatsuden* both contain short anecdotes about Emperor Shōmu visiting Gyōki. Numerous medieval biographies seem to have exaggerated Gyōki's ties to the imperial court at the beginning of the 740s. In Chapter 4 the implications of Gyoki's sudden participation in a large-scale imperial project will be considered.

The Vairocana project and Gyōki's promotion

The number of large-scale construction projects that the imperial court undertook during Emperor Shōmu's reign is quite startling. More than previous emperors, Emperor Shōmu was concerned with displaying the symbolic power of the emperor as the chief sponsor of Buddhism. In 743, Shōmu made clear that the construction of the monumental Vairocana statue should be different from other Buddhist projects that the imperial court had previously sponsored. Shōmu's edict states, "If there is anybody who can donate even a blade of grass or a handful of soil in order to help build the statue, their donation will be welcome" (*Shoku nihongi*: 10/15/743). From the Nara court's perspective, Gyōki was one of the figures most suited to lead this project, because he had not only been educated in the official monastic establishment but had worked closely with lay believers and the local clan leaders. However, despite all the attention that Gyōki has received among the academic community regarding his participation in the Vairocana campaign, none of his biographies, including Gyōki's gravestone memorial, mention it. We must focus later on why Gyōki was chosen to represent this imperial project.

The final event that always receives attention in secondary literature is Gyōki's ironic promotion to the rank of senior primary prelate (*daisōjō)*. In the first month of 743, Emperor Shōmu took the unprecedented step

of appointing Gyōki to the post of *daisōjō*, which was higher than that of even the most important monks of the central monastic office (*Shoku nihongi*: 01/21/743). As mentioned earlier, Gyōki's status as a fully ordained monk is mentioned only in the *Gyōki bosatsuden*, which was compiled during the eleventh century. Thus, quite possibly the Nara court appointed to the highest monastic rank in the country a monk who had not been properly ordained. Unclear is whether Gyōki was promoted to this rank for his services in the Vairocana campaign, but this promotion seems to have meant very little to him in his late seventies. None of the texts states that he ever exercised his authority as a member of the *sōgō*, and his gravestone memorial explains that he even received one hundred *ko* of land but did not show interest in these honors.

In summary, the earliest accounts of Gyōki, such as his gravestone memorial and his biography contained in the imperial history, indicate that his life cannot easily fit the subservient image of the official monk. Although earliest texts agree that he had only received his preliminary vows in 682, such medieval texts as the *Gyōki Bosatsuden* added new accounts of his full ordination (*jukkai*) to legitimize Gyōki's authority. The most blatant defiance that Gyōki displayed in the accounts discussed in this chapter was his violations of the *Sōniryō* set up by the secular authorities. The tone of the 717 edict against Gyōki, which is listed in the *Shoku nihongi* and the *Ryō no shūge*, suggests that Gyōki may have been conspiring to form a Buddhist faction or clique by preaching to the masses, extorting donations, and organizing gatherings. However, these incidents seem to have been consciously omitted by medieval hagiographers. The *Ōjō gokurakuki* and the *Gyōki bosatsuden*, for example, glorify his ascetic activities and preaching without discussing his violations of the *Sōniryō*. In fact, most medieval accounts highlight Gyōki's willingness to work with Emperor Shōmu and other high-ranking officials of the Nara court. If one reads only hagiographic accounts, Gyōki's appointment to the highest monastic rank in the Buddhist establishment would seem far less puzzling. Now that we have a general overview of most events and activities attributed to Gyōki, we consider his life in the hagiographic context.

2

THE BODHISATTVA TRADITION AND THE HAGIOGRAPHER'S CRAFT

Hagiographic accounts have been read aloud as sermons, collected by courtiers and illustrated by renowned artists throughout history. Each collection narrates how exceptional individuals carried out the lofty ideals of their religion. Because the accounts are often fantastic and quite simple, some scholars may feel that they are not worth examining. However, these texts are excellent sources for learning about the intellectual and religious climate of the times.

The Buddhist hagiography that narrated Gyōki's life were written in an age when acquiring even the most basic information about the subject (e.g. birthplace and family background) was quite difficult. Essential to understanding the significance of Gyōki's charitable activities is having a general comprehension of Buddhist hagiography in Japan.

Much of the early Buddhist hagiography that has survived to this day focused on miracles and spiritual ordeals of eminent monks rather than retelling the subjects' entire life. Modern readers expect "a good biography," regardless of whether it portrays the life of a religious figure, to describe the subjects' biases and character flaws as well as their extraordinary achievements.[1] However, identifying with the Buddhist monks we are examining is difficult because they were so far removed from the rest of society.

Examining hagiography of any culture requires an extremely delicate balance. As Kenneth Woodward rightly observes, if one becomes obsessed with finding the historical individual behind the representations of a particular monk, saint, or holy person, he or she will become stuck on formulaic biographical information that the compiler has established for each saint. Because the very existence of many of the Christian saints and Buddhist monks is not historically verifiable, "It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the saints *are* their stories. On this view, making saints is a process whereby a life is transformed into a text."[2]

Conversely, if one completely ignores questions of historicity, why should one bother to examine these saints in their cultural contexts at all? In recent decades, the trend is to simplify and universalize the characteristics of eminent monks, bodhisattvas, and other holy persons throughout the world to devise a "typology" of saintliness. Although this process may be useful for creating a series of archetypes for the study of world mythology, one cannot learn about the intended audience and doctrinal constraints that were so important for the people who painstakingly compiled hagiography. Thus, we will not have to examine the lives of bodhisattvas in a vacuum.

A systematic examination of the Buddhist hagiography of Japan reveals that compilers often explicitly state their ideological concerns, unlike their Christian counterparts. In Europe, hagiographers were often merely scribes. They simply assembled what they heard, leaving no trace of their intellectual taste. Pamela Gehrke, who is an expert on Christian hagiography of medieval Europe, argues that canonization committees preferred these kinds of sacred biographies, as they did not have to worry about whether they were ideologically correct.[3] In Japan, such notable hagiographers as Ōe no Masafusa and Chingen copied many passages word for word from earlier manuscripts, but they always added their own responses and interpretations. For these men, the importance did not lie in recording the lives of monks and holy men who had performed miracles during their lifetime. They were more interested in assembling a collection of spiritual biographies that dated back to ancient times and could justify the validity of their sectarian beliefs.

The bodhisattva tradition in Japan

Defining "sainthood" in the Roman Catholic tradition is easier than defining Japanese Buddhism, because the criteria for sanctity were rigorously defined by the church. In Nara and Heian Japan, a wide range of Buddhist monks and even lay believers were honored with the bodhisattva title, but this phenomenon was rather short-lived. The most comprehensive hagiographic text in Japan was compiled by a monk called Kokan Shiren early in the fourteenth century. The *Buddhist Records from the Genkō Era* (*Genkō shakusho*) was the first of its kind in that it included more than four hundred accounts of eminent monks since the reign of Empress Suiko (r. 592–628). In the preface, Kokan Shiren states that he modeled the structure of his text after Chinese hagiography of Buddhist monks from the Liang, Tang, and Song dynasties.[4] Interestingly enough, only four monks were honored with the title *bodhisattva* in this collection.

Aside from Eison, all these monks were active during the eighth and ninth centuries, which suggests that the custom of calling the most eminent monks *bodhisattva* had more or less disappeared by the medieval period. Kokan Shiren may have simply addressed eminent monks as *bodhisattva*, because earlier texts had done so. The Pure Land thinkers of the Kamakura period, such as Hōnen and Nichiren, emphasized the inability of sentient beings to rely on their own abilities to achieve enlightenment, so possibly this pessimistic worldview discouraged people from exalting virtuous monks.

Holy persons whose lives exemplify one or more aspects of the bodhisattva path described in various sutras were regarded as "bodhisattva monks" (*bosatsusō*) in ancient Japan. This term is somewhat confusing, because not every holy person who set out on the bodhisattva path was a fully ordained monk. In Japan, bodhisattva monks were active in their villages as lay monks. Early Buddhist hagiographic texts seem to have favored the Mahayanist notion of the bodhisattva. As Donald Lopez Jr. suggested, the Hinayanist tradition viewed the bodhisattva as an extremely rare individual who sets out on the path to buddhahood for the sake of others. Because the bodhisattvas postponed their own enlightenment, they would require eons before they could finally achieve their goal. However, the Mahayana tradition rendered the concept of the bodhisattva more accessible to ordinary people by reducing the qualifications. Mahayana sutras, such as the *Ugraparipṛcchā*, opened the bodhisattva path to both monks and lay persons.[5]

In discussing the concept of the bodhisattva in Japan, dividing them into celestial bodhisattvas and bodhisattva monks is useful. The celestial bodhisattvas are not historical personalities but physical manifestations of various qualities, such as wisdom and compassion. Celestial bodhisattvas, such as Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, and , developed their own cults dedicated to the salvation of lay believers and monks. Like Christian saints, these celestial bodhisattvas were often depicted as intercessors for the people who prayed to them. However, because celestial bodhisattvas were not historical figures, depicting them as fully developed personalities probably was difficult. In most Mahayana sutras, the celestial bodhisattvas were simply depicted as attendants of the Buddha.[6]

The Mahayanists also emphasized that the bodhisattva did not perform religious austerities for enhancing his own spiritual development. Although the bodhisattva was capable of entering Nirvana, he remained in the turmoil of worldly life so that he could save the rest of the masses who were caught in the endless cycle of rebirth. The bodhisattva also hoped to transfer to all sentient beings the merit that he had accumulated over several life-times.

In the Japanese Mahayanist tradition, those who wished to embark on the bodhisattva path were supposed to make a series of vows that were known as *bosatsu no daigan* in Japanese. Monks were supposed to make these vows so that they would not change their minds when they encountered various temptations and hardships. The Ashuku bosatsu (*Akṣobhya bodhisattva*) made eleven vows, and Hōzō bosatsu (*Dharmākara bodhisattva*) made twenty-five vows. Although the number of required vows varied according to tradition, they included promises to travel around the world, preach to the masses, and distribute to everybody the merit they accumulated during their countless lives.

As the bodhisattva progressed through the various stages of asceticism, he was believed to be able to acquire miraculous powers. He was believed to ascend from heaven to heaven, but unlike the Christian saint, he did not remain in the celestial realm forever. After reaching the eighth ground, he was thought to be completely free from rebirth, but he chose to descend into the world to save sentient beings.[7] In addition to the ten stages, bodhisattvas were associated with the *pāramitās* (virtuous practices) they performed. Most sutras list either six or ten *pāramitās*. According to the *Avataṃsaka sutra* (*Huayan jing*), they are (1) charity, (2) observing the precepts, (3) patience, (4) perseverance, (5) meditation, (6) intelligence, (7) expedient means, (8) willingness, (9) strength and (10) knowledge.[8]

How relevant were these theoretical structures to the actual historical monks who were honored by the community as bodhisattvas in Japan? The Japanese monks could not possibly carry out all the *pāramitās*, but most of the bodhisattva monks were identified with one or more of the *pāramitās*, such as charity. Unfortunately, the opinions of the bodhisattva monks in Japan cannot be surmised, as many were obscure or low-ranking monks who certainly did not leave behind any writings.

However, one thing that seems fairly certain is that in early Japan the bodhisattva monk emerged in popular tales and hagiography as an ascetic who preferred to conduct his charitable activities outside the mainstream monastic establishment. During the eighth and ninth centuries, the term *bosatsu* did not always refer to fully ordained Buddhist monks. Some of the *bosatsu* who appear in the "biographies of lofty monks" (*kōsōden*) were married shamanic figures living in local villages. The *Nihon ryōiki* (822?) reveals that monks who were called *bosatsu* during the Nara period did not usually belong to any particular temple. They may have taken vows at a particular temple when they were younger, but they spent most of their lives traveling from one location to the next.

According to most Buddhist hagiography in early Japan, bodhisattva monks remained in their villages performing shamanic roles within the community during the Nara period. Ignoring the strict regulations of the

Sōniryō would have been easier within these remote villages. Tale III-2 of the *Nihon ryōiki* shows that Article 2 of the *Sōniryō*, which forbade Buddhist monks to cure the illnesses of commoners, was not taken very seriously. Although Kyōkai introduced Yōgō zenshi as a fully ordained priest of Kōfuku temple, the tale describes how he visited the residence of an ailing commoner in Kumano village to perform esoteric rituals and chase out demonic spirits.

In Nara and Heian Japan, bodhisattva monks seem to have been mostly chosen by popular veneration rather than by the official monastic network. Unlike the Christian *Lives of Saints* of the middle ages, no official biography in Japan was declared by the highest monastic authorities to be a sacred text. Most hagiography of eminent monks in Japan were compiled by a single abbot or a retired courtier who decided to spend his final years performing various religious devotions. The *Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sutra from Ancient Japan* (*Honchō hokkegenki*) was compiled by the Tendai monk, Chingen, between 1040 and 1044. As the title suggests, the collection focused on those monks who read and upheld the teachings of the *Lotus Sutra*. The biographies were arranged chronologically and according to the status of the monk. Some were accounts of bodhisattva monks, but the rest of the entries described the achievements of novices and partially ordained monks. One of the chief characteristics of Japanese hagiographic texts is that they were almost never limited to the accounts of bodhisattva monks. Great masters (*daishi*), eminent priests (*shōnin*), and holy men (*hijiri*) were also included into the framework of Japanese Buddhist hagiography.

Gyōki in hagiographic studies

Keeping these trends in mind, let us examine the historical contexts of the hagiography that narrate Gyōki's life. In 1998, a symposium was held in Sakai-city, Osaka to discuss new ideas and directions for Gyōki studies in the twenty-first century. Scholars who had written major works on Gyōki, such as Inoue Kaoru, Chiyoda Izuru, Yoshida Yasuo, and Miyagi Yōichirō, gave lectures on the sociopolitical conditions of the Nara period, the reliability of Gyōki's early and medieval accounts, and recent archeological findings. The lecturers provided the audience with a chronology of the most important events in Gyōki's life and cited the primary texts that describe each of his activities.[9] This chronology, which was compiled by the foremost authorities on early Japanese Buddhism, is particularly revealing, because it shows the extent to which their understanding of this enigmatic monk is dependent on medieval sources. The chronology and the primary texts follow:

Gyōki's chronology 668–749

668: Gyōki was born in Ebara village, Ōtori district in Izumi province (*Gyōki bosatsuden*).
His father's name was Koshi no Saichi, and his mother was called Hichita no Konihime (*Daisōjō sharibyōki*).
682: At the age of fifteen, he took his preliminary vows (*Gyōki bosatsuden*).
691: Gyōki received full ordination (*jukai*) at age twenty-four under the instruction of Tokukō *zenshi*, who resided in Takamiya temple (*Gyōki bosatsuden*).
704: Gyōki resided in the mountains for many years (*Gyōki bosatsuden*). He then returned to his birthplace and converted his parents' home into Ebara temple (*Gyōki nenpu*).
705: Gyōki built Ōsue-in in Ōtori district (*Gyōki nenpu*).
He then set up his own residence in Sakidō near the Naniwa capital (*Gyōki bosatsuden*).
707: Gyōki moved to a mountain residence in the Ikoma hills (*Gyōki bosatsuden*).
710: Empress Genmei (r. 707–715) moved the capital to Heijō (*Shoku nihongi*).
712: Gyōki moved to a mountain residence in Kusano and engaged in various kinds of ascetic training (*Gyōki bosatsuden*).
716: Gyōki built Onkōji in Hiratsuka district, Yamato province (*Gyōki nenpu*).
717: Empress Genshō (r. 715–724) issued an imperial edict condemning Gyōki's preaching activities and his followers (*Shoku nihongi*).
722: Gyōki built Sugawara temple within the Heijō capital (*Gyōki nenpu*).
723: The Nara court issued an edict allowing peasants to own newly cleared land up to three generations (*Shoku nihongi*).
726: Gyōki built Ōchi-in in Ōtori district, Izumi province (*Gyōki nenpu*).
731: Emperor Shōmu allowed a number of Gyōki's disciples to be ordained (*Shoku nihongi*).
740: Gyōki built Izumibashi-in in Sōraku district, Yamashiro province (*Gyōki nenpu*).
740 and 743: Emperor Shōmu moved the capital to Kuni (*Shoku nihongi*).
741: Gyōki and his followers submitted to the imperial court a summary of all their charitable activities (*Gyōki nenpu*).

743: Emperor Shōmu vowed to build a large statue of the Vairocana Buddha. Gyōki led his disciples in participating in the project (*Shoku nihongi*).
745: Emperor Shōmu awarded Gyōki the rank of *daisōjō* (*Shoku nihongi*).
749: Gyōki passed away at Sugawara temple (*Daisōjō sharibyōki*).

This chronology is based on four primary texts that include the gravestone memorial (*Daisōjō sharibyōki*, 749), the Nara imperial history (*Shoku nihongi*, 796), a list of Gyōki's construction projects (*Gyōki nenpu*, 1175), and an early medieval biography (*Gyōki bosatsuden*, eleventh century). The first question that comes to mind when reviewing this chronology is why have these scholars chosen two medieval texts to uncover the "historical" Gyōki? As mentioned in Chapter 1, the only texts that discuss Gyōki's life in detail during the Nara and early Heian periods are the *Shoku nihongi*, the *Daisōjō sharibyōki*, and the *Nihon ryōiki*. Perhaps Yoshida Yasuo and Inoue Kaoru simply believed that not enough biographical information existed without the medieval texts.[10] The *Gyōki nenpu* (1175) and other medieval hagiography certainly provide more information about Gyōki's ancestral background and the content of his charitable projects than do any of the earlier sources. Also puzzling is that these scholars chose to cite a late Heian hagiographic text, called the *Gyōki bosatsuden*, to describe Gyōki's birthplace and date of ordination, even though Nara texts provide similar information.

The chronology just listed is indicative of the way in which Gyōki has been interpreted by scholars in recent decades. A closer look reveals that this chronology fills in the gaps in Gyōki's movements by bringing together information from accounts that were composed several hundred years apart. Although this chronology is greatly simplified, some of these scholars use the same method of mixing the official Nara accounts with the medieval hagiography in their historical studies of Gyōki.

If scholars want to rely on the full range of medieval hagiographic accounts, tales, and fragmentary accounts of Gyōki, they should make clear that they are examining the "images" of a venerable monk, who lived during the Asuka-Nara period, and not the actual historical figure. As we can observe from the earliest accounts of the *Shoku nihongi*, Gyōki had become a living legend by the end of his life. The content of Gyōki's preaching and the extent to which he participated in charitable projects are issues at which Nara texts hint, but these matters were chiefly elaborated by the compilers of Gyōki legends during the medieval period.

Conversely, simply to assume that the earliest sources are historically more accurate and that later texts are mostly fantastic legends would be

a mistake. Although Nara texts, such as the *Daisōjō sharibyōki*, include information about Gyōki that could not have been obtained easily without witnessing Gyōki's activities, possibly the courtiers who compiled these texts were so close to the actual events that they were not able to disentangle themselves from the political biases of their regime. With these factors in mind, we will attempt to uncover the compilers' backgrounds, their intended audience, and the reliability of primary texts that discuss Gyōki. Though this is a rather tedious task, the various accounts of Gyōki show that this Buddhist saint of the eighth century represented values and ideas that could not have existed during his own lifetime.

The earliest texts

Basically three kinds of accounts were circulating by the end of the Kamakura period, all of which idealized Gyōki's accomplishments to some extent. These texts were (1) the official histories from the Nara period and Gyōki's gravestone memorial, (2) Heian accounts that recorded the lives of eminent monks and nuns, and (3) the medieval texts that were often more detailed than the official histories in recording the exact dates and locations of Gyōki's construction projects.

The oldest account of Gyōki that exists today is the *Daisōjō sharibyōki* (749), which we examined earlier in the chapter.[11] In 1915, Umehara Suesada discovered a broken stone fragment of what appeared to be a funereal urn in Arisato village near Mt. Kochi in Nara prefecture; it bore an inscription that matched the exact wording of the oldest surviving copy of the *Daisōjō sharibyōki*.[12] Why a piece of the funereal urn would turn up in a small village near Mt. Ikoma is somewhat of a mystery. However, 486 years after Gyōki's death, a thirteenth-century monk called Jakumetsu stated in his *Origin of Chikurin Temple on Mt. Ikoma* (*Ikomayama chikurinji engi*) that Gyōki's forgotten grave had actually been dug up by a group of monks.[13] The reliability of this Kamakura text is highly questionable, because it is a mystical account of how Gyōki's ghost admonished monks for leading degenerate lives and neglecting his grave. However, for whatever reason, Gyōki's funereal urn may actually have been rediscovered, and the memorial inscription could have been copied by Jakumetsu, as stated in the *Chikurinji engi*. To this day, no other remains have been identified in the vicinity of Chikurin temple, so possibly the funereal urn was moved during the thirteenth century.

In any case, Umehara stated that the eighteen characters, which were deeply engraved in the broken fragment that he discovered, resembled those on a stone funereal urn in Okayama prefecture dating back to 708. Furthermore, other high-ranking courtiers' gravestones that have survived

to this day show that memorial inscriptions were often made in bronze tablets, so the broken stone fragment that Umehara discovered is highly likely of what actually remained of Gyōki's eighth-century funereal urn.

The *Daisōjō sharibyōki* is attributed to Gyōki's disciple, Shinsei, who claims to have witnessed Gyōki's cremation and burial. Although Shinsei does not explain how he obtained Gyōki's biographical information, its lack of concrete detail gives us the sense that he did not personally join Gyōki's group of followers until the end of the master's life. The *Daisōjō sharibyōki* simply lists the names of Gyōki's Korean ancestors and the date on which he took his monastic vows and explains that he had a large following. However, the text does not convey the sense that Gyōki was one of the most eminent monks in Japanese history. In fact, the *Daisōjō sharibyōki* does not discuss Gyōki's relation with the Nara court, except to say that he received the rank of *daisōjō*. The compiler of the *Daisōjō sharibyōki*, Keisei, gives the reader the impression that Gyōki was indifferent to the honors that the court showered on him at the end of his life.

By contrast, the biography contained in the *Sequel to the Chronicles of Japan* (*Shoku nihongi*), which is translated in the appendix at the end of this book, offers a wide range of views on Gyōki. This forty-volume text is the second of the *rikkokushi* (six official histories), and records events concerning all the Nara emperors. The *Shoku nihongi* was compiled by the head of the ministry of central affairs, Fujiwara Tsugutada, and two scholars who descended from Paekche kings.[14] The style of the *Shoku nihongi* is extremely varied.[15] It covers a wide range of events from court rituals and descriptions of the countryside to biographies of eminent monks and courtiers.

The *Shoku nihongi* states that the Nara court initially condemned Gyōki as a rebellious monk in their 717 edict. However, after several decades, the court altered their position and praised Gyōki's construction projects and awarded him the highest rank in the central monastic office (*sōgō*). This change in the court's policy toward Gyōki can be detected only in the *Shoku nihongi*. A comparison of the *Shoku nihongi* account to his gravestone memorial seems to show that the *Shoku nihongi* biography puts far more emphasis on Gyōki's relation with the Nara court. However, neither the gravestone memorial nor medieval hagiographic texts claim that Gyōki's charitable activities flourished because of imperial sponsorship. Thus, one cannot take these highly politicized historical annals at face value.

A third compilation that portrays the activities of Gyōki (and is fully translated in the appendix) is the *Miraculous Tales of Ancient Japan* (*Nihon ryōiki*: 822). It was compiled by the Buddhist monk Kyōkai (exact dates unknown). In the preface, Kyōkai explains that as a monk

of Yakushiji, he felt obliged to record the various strange happenings in Japan so that people would be moved and reform their evil ways. As a monk of the official Buddhist establishment, Kyōkai's main objective seems to have been to spread Buddhist teachings to the villages and remote provinces of Japan through inspirational fantastic parables. Gyōki appears in seven of Kyōkai's tales (I-5, II-2, II-7, II-8, II-12, II-29, II-30)[16] as a shamanic figure who uses his superhuman powers (*jinzūriki*) to warn local villagers of their spiritual shortcomings. Although none of the tales narrates Gyōki's entire life, Kyōkai scatters biographical information about Gyōki (e.g. his place of birth and his ordination) throughout the text.[17] The *Nihon ryōiki*, which was compiled more than a half a century after Gyōki's death, is particularly revealing because it treats Gyōki as a *shami* or a monk who still has not received his full vows (II-7). Unclear is where Kyōkai obtained his information about Gyōki, but his description of Gyōki's ability to read other peoples' thoughts and learn about their past lives suggests that these tales might already have been circulating among the local villages. Seemingly, if the *Daisōjō sharibyōki* and the *Shoku nihongi* had been the only textual sources that discussed Gyōki's activities, the medieval hagiography may have been much less fantastic.[18]

In most of the tales of the *Nihon ryōiki,* Kyōkai explicitly states that it was the local believers who called certain extraordinary monks "bodhisattva" or "bodhisattva monks". In tale I-5, Kyōkai explains that Gyōki was an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī*,* but even such earlier sources as the *Memorial of the Senior Primary Prelate* (*Daisōjō sharibyōki*) and the *Shoku nihongi* (797) explicitly state that the local people, rather than the imperial court, called him *bosatsu*.

The *Nihon ryōiki* was an extremely influential work in shaping the narratives of Gyōki of the medieval period. Several of the tales describing Gyōki's miraculous powers were incorporated word for word into the *Illustrated Text on the Three Treasures* (*Sanbōe kotoba*) and *A Short Record of Japan* (*Fusōryakki*). However, one must exercise caution against using the accounts of the *Nihon ryōiki* to reconstruct Gyōki's historical narrative. Although Kyōkai provides place names and dates for some of Gyōki's activities, they do not agree with the more official accounts of the *Shoku nihongi* and the *Daisōjō sharibyōki*. The accounts of the *Niho ryōiki* are primarily useful for showing how the rather banal accounts of Gyōki from the Nara period had been transformed into fantastic legends half a century after Gyōki's death. In Japan, the idealized images of bodhisattvas and other holy figures tended to become more detailed and dramatized a century or two after the death of their subjects.

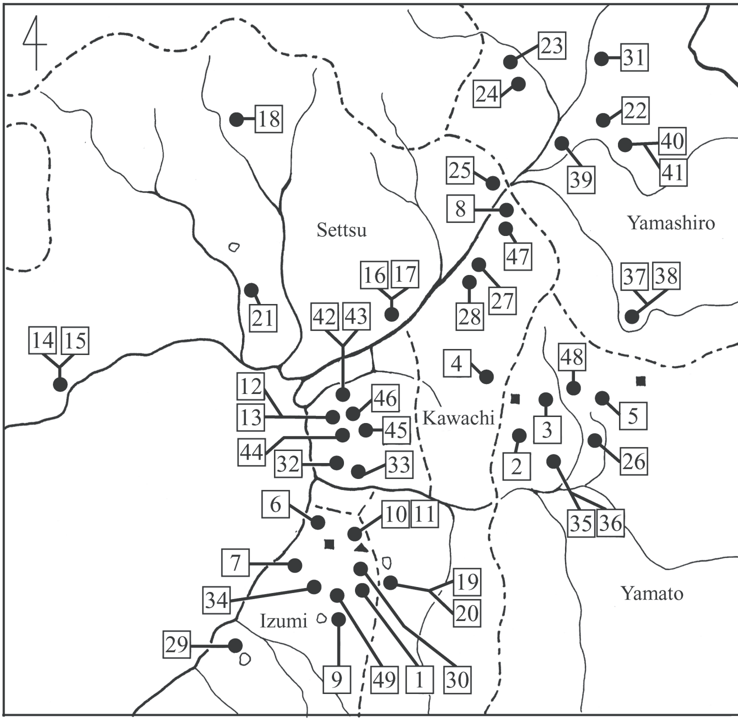
Medieval hagiography

Toward the latter half of the Heian period, a number of compilers combined the official accounts of the Nara court with the more fantastic tales of the *Nihon ryōiki* to produce a series of hagiographic texts that narrated Gyōki's entire life (see Chart 0.1, p. 9). The form of narrative that such hagiographers as Yoshishige no Yasutane (?–1002), Chingen (eleventh century), and Kokan Shiren (1278–1346) used has been described by historians as Pure Land biographies (*ōjōden)* and biographies of lofty monks (*kōsōden)*. One of the goals of the *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki* (rendered into English in the appendix) was to show that both monks and lay believers in the not-so-distant past had been able to achieve birth into Amida's western paradise.[19] Yoshishige no Yasutane, who collected accounts of monks who achieved *ōjō* (Rebirth in the Pure Land, or Amida's western paradise), included Gyōki's life as part of the Pure Land tradition, even though Gyōki could not possibly have been influenced by Pure Land teachings during his lifetime. As Gyōki was not affiliated with any school or temple, appropriating him into their hagiography was convenient for compilers.

Although the *Ōjō gokurakuki* had a clear sectarian bias, Fukuoka Takashi explained that its structure and style seem to have been adopted by numerous medieval hagiographers who narrated Gyōki's life.[20] As we see in Chapter 6, Yoshishige's account was different from the Nara accounts in that it presented Gyōki as a bodhisattva destined to offer salvation to sentient beings from the very day he was born.

In contrast to the rather fantastic tone of the *Ōjō gokurakuki*, the *Gyōki bosatsuden*, which was written sometime at the beginning of the eleventh century, has been regarded by Japanese Buddhist scholars as a text that sticks to "historical issues." Unlike other medieval accounts of Gyōki, the *Gyōki bosatsuden* omits many fantastic incidents that Yoshishige no Yasutane borrowed from the *Nihon ryoiki* and focuses on Gyoki's construction projects and his relation to the Nara court.[21] However, what seems problematic is that some scholars have presented this text as one of the most reliable sources, because its author and circumstances surrounding its compilation are unknown. The only text that mentions the *Gyōki bosatsuden* is an obscure monk's diary compiled in 1106, called the *Diary on the Seven Great Temples* (*Shichidaiji nikki*).

The *Gyōki bosatsuden* lists the same exact locations and dates of Gyōki's birth and ordination as the oldest texts of the Nara period and even adds some new biographical information, such as the name of the master who supposedly administered Gyōki's final vows (*gusokukai*). The author states that Gyōki was involved in the construction of six bridges, nine road-side shelters, forty-nine practice halls, two ports, fifteen



Map 2.1 Gyōki's forty-nine construction sites

reservoirs, seven irrigation canals, and three wells. It even describes specific incidents that motivated Gyōki to participate in these projects. Other incidents that none of the earlier texts discuss include Gyōki's encounter with Emperor Shōmu at Izumibashi-in during an imperial tour, the Nara court's endowment of land to Gyōki, and the administering of the bodhisattva vow (*bosatsukai*) to Emperor Shōmu and Empress Kōmyō by Gyōki at age eighty-two.[22] One cannot assume that the compiler of the *Gyōki bosatsuden* had some additional source of information, because some of Gyōki's activities that the earliest texts of the Nara period discussed seem to have been intentionally left out. The imperial condemnation of Gyōki for "deceiving the masses" is completely ignored in the *Gyōki bosatsuden*. In other words, the compiler of the *Gyōki bosatsuden* seems to have created an account that focused on the harmonious relation between Gyōki and the Nara court. However, the *Gyōki bosatsuden* was not the only text that deviated from the narrative of the earliest Nara accounts.

Table 2.1 Gyōki's construction projects 705–749*

	Name of temple	*Gyōki's Age*	*Location during the Nara Period*	*Present location*	*Year*	*Status*
1	Daisue-in	38	Izumi Province, Ōtori District, Mt. Omura	Osaka, Takakuradai Icchō	705	Exists
2	Onkō-ji	49	Yamato Province, Heguri District, Tokomuro Village	Nara, Ikoma District, Heguri District	716	
3	Ryūfuku-in	51	Yamato Province, Soeshimo District, Tomi Vallage	Nara, Ōwada, Oiwake	718	
4	Ishigori-in	53	Kawachi Province, Kawachi District, Kusakabe Village	Higashi Osaka City, Kusakabe-chō	720	
5	Kikō-in	54	Heijō Capital, Sanjō Sanbō	Nara, Sugawara-chō	721	Exists
6	Seijōdo-in	57	Izumi Province, Ōtori District, Ashida	Osaka, Sakai City, Minatomachi	724	
7	Seijōdoni-in	57	Izumi Province, Ōtori District, Kusakabe, Takaishi Village	Osaka, Takaishi City	724	
8	Kusuon-in	58	Kawachi Province, Katano District, Ichijōnai	Osaka, Hirakata City, Kuzuha Nakanoshiba, Ni-chōme	725	Exists
9	Hinōike-in	59	Izumi Province, Ōtori District, Wada Village	Osaka, Sakai City, Hinō	726	
10	Ōno-ji	60	Izumi Province, Ōtori District, Ōno Village	Osaka, Sakai City, Dotōchō	727	Exists
11	Ōnoni-in	60	Izumi Province, Ōtori District, Ōno Village	Osaka, Sakai City, Dotōchō		
12	Zengen-in	63	Settsu Province, Nishinari District, Tsumori Village	Osaka, Nishinari District	730	

13	Zengenni-in	63	Settsu Province, Nishinari District, Uhara Village	Osaka, Nishinari District	730	
14	Funasue-in	63	Settsu Province, Uhara District, Uji Village	Kobe, Hyōgo District	730	
15	Funasueni-in	63	Settsu Province, Uhara District, Uji Village	Kobe, Hyōgo District	730	
16	Takasebashi-in	63	Settsu Province, Shimashita District Hotsumi Village	Osaka, Higashinari District, Daidō Minami	730	
17	Takasebashini-in	63	Settsu Province, Shimashita District, Hotsumi Village	Osaka, Higashinari District, Daidō Minami	730	
18	Yazu-in	63	Settsu Province, Kawanabe District, Yazu Village	Hyōgo, Kawanabe District, Inagawa-chō, Kizu	730	
19	Sayamaike-in	64	Kawachi Province, Tanhi District, Kyōzan Village	Osaka, Sayama City	731	
20	Sayamaikeni-in	64	Kawachi Province, Tanhi District, Kyōzan Village	Osaka, Sayama City	731	
21	Koyase-in	64	Settsu Province, Kawanabe District, Yamamoto Village	Hyōgo, Itami City, Teramoto	731	Exists
22	Hōzen-in	64	Yamashiro Province, Kii District, Fukakusa Village	Kyoto, Fushimi District, Fukakusa, Taniguchi-chō	731	
23	Kawara-in	64	Yamashiro Province, Kazuno District, Ōya Village	Kyoto, Ukyō District	731	
24	Ōi-in	64	Yamashiro Province, Katsurano District, Ōi Village	Kyoto, Ukyō District, Tenryū-ji, Tsukuri Michi-chō	731	
25	Yamazaki-in	64	Yamashiro Province, Otokuni District, Yamasaki Village	Osaka, Mishima District, Shimamoto-chō	731	
26	Ryūfukuni-in	64	Yamato Province, Soeshimo District, Tomi Village	Nara, Yamatoda-chō, Oiwake	731	

Continued …

Table 2.1 Gyōki's construction projects 705–749 (continued)

	Name of temple	*Gyōki's Age*	*Location during the Nara Period*	*Present location*	*Year*	*Status*
27	Hirakata-in	66	Kawachi Province, Manda District, Ika Village	Osaka, Hirakata City, Ikaga	733	
28	Komotani-in	66	Kawachi Province, Ibarata District, Ika Village	Osaka, Hirakata City, Ikaga	733	
29	Ryūchi-in	67	Izumi Province, Izumi Minami District, Shimo Ikeda Village	Osaka, Kishiwada City, Ikejiri-chō	734	Exists
30	Fukaini-in	67	Izumi Province, Ōtori District, Fukai Village	Osaka, Sakai City, Fukai	734	
31	Yoshida-in	67	Yamashiro Province, Otagi District	Kyoto, Sakyō-ku, Kagura Okamachi	734	
32	Sata-in	67	Settsu Province, Sumiyoshi District	Osaka, Sumiyoshi-ku	734	
33	Karesaka-in	67	Settsu Province, Sumiyoshi District, Mitsu	Osaka, Sumiyoshi-ku Nagasa-chō	734	
34	Tsurutaike-in	70	Izumi Province, Ōtori District, Yamada Village	Osaka, Sakai City, Kusabe	737	
35	Zuda-in	70	Yamato Province, Soeshimo District, Yata Okamoto Village	Nara, Yamato District, Yamashi Yada-chō	737	
36	Zudani-in	70	Yamato Province, Soeshimo District, Yata Okamoto Village	Nara, Yamato District, Yamashi Yada-chō	737	
37	Hotsubodai-in	73	Yamashiro Province, Sōraku District, Ōgoma Village	Kyoto, Sōraku District, Yamashiro-chō, Kamigoma	740	Exists
38	Ryūfukuni-in	73	Yamashiro Province, Sōraku District, Ōgoma Village	Kyoto, Sōraku District, Yamashiro-chō, Kamigoma	740	

39	Senfuku-in	73	Yamashiro Province, Kii District, Ishii Village	Kyoto, Fushimi District	740
40	Fuse-in	73	Yamashiro Province, Kii District, Ishii Village	Kyoto, Fushimi District	740
41	Fuseni-in	73	Yamashiro Province, Kii District, Ishii Village	Kyoto, Fushimi District	740
42	Daifuku-in	77	Settsu Province, Nishinari District, Mitsu Village	Osaka, Chūō District, Mitsudera-machi	745
43	Daifukuni-in	77	Settsu Province, Nishinari District, Mitsu Village	Osaka, Chūō District, Mitsudera-machi	745
44	Naniwado-in	77	Settsu Province, Nishinari District, Tsumori Village	Osaka, Nishinari District	745
45	Makihara-in	77	Settsu Province, Nishinari District, Tsumori Village	Osaka, Nishinari District	745
46	Sayabe-in	77	Settsu Province, Nishinari District, Tsumori Village	Osaka, Nishinari District	745
47	Hōon-in	82	Kawachi Province, Kōno District, Kuzuha Village	Osaka, Hirakata City, Kuzuha	749
48	Nagaoka-in	82	Sugawara-ji, Nishioka	Nara, Hikita-chō	749
49	Ōniwa-in	82	Izumi Province, Ōtori District, Jōgami-gun, Oniwa Village	Osaka, Sakai City, Oniwadera	749

*This list only includes the practice halls that are attributed to Gyōki. It does not list the bridges, dikes, irrigation canals, ports, and road-side shelters

The *Gyōki nenpu* and its reliability

The *Gyōki nenpu* is the only text that lists all the construction projects in which Gyōki participated. When one observes the long list of road-side shelters, practice halls, bridges, irrigation canals, and orphanages (rendered into English in the appendix) compiled more than four hundred years after Gyōki's death, a quite natural reaction is to suspect the accuracy of its contents. However, most scholarship on Gyōki's construction projects cite the *Gyōki nenpu* as the most important source. A text compiled by an official who esteemed Gyōki could easily alter or exaggerate Gyōki's biographical information, but to ignore the exact nature of Gyōki's charitable projects is even more regrettable.

In the 1998 symposium, the most eminent scholars of Gyōki and early Japanese Buddhism predicted that future studies would be able to determine the geopolitical significance of Gyōki's charitable projects. They argued that examining the social status of the local clans who lived in the villages where Gyōki built special facilities and their relation with the Nara court could help to determine why these projects were necessary. In the 1980s, the analysis of archeological findings in the environs of the Ishigori-in, Daisue-in, Kusuon-in, and Onodera revealed that many of the facilities attributed to Gyōki were built in locations where Korean immigrant families resided.[23] Many of these immigrants were known for their skills in craftsmanship and temple construction.

In Kōnin's imperial edict of 773, the empress lamented the pitiful conditions of six of Gyōki's forty practice halls. She encouraged monks and nuns to become the masters of these facilities and donated seventeen *chō* of land to six of Gyōki's temples (*Shoku nihongi*: 11/20/773). In his *Treatise on Exoteric Buddhism* (*Kenkairon*), Saichō was the one who first declared that there were exactly forty-nine practice halls.[24] When Izumi Kochi no Sukune set out to compile the *Gyōki nenpu* in the twelfth century, some of the sites on which Gyōki's construction projects stood had been forgotten. The twelfth century *Records on Prince Shōtoku and his Surroundings* (*Jōgūtaishi shūiki*), which was written by an obscure monk called Hōkai, states that Izumi was prompted by his faith in Gyōki to dig up records from Nara and Heian archives.[25] In his epilogue, Izumi stated that the *Gyōki nenpu* is based on three separate sources: (1) archives from Sugawara temple dating back to the third month of 805, (2) the *Kōdaiki*, which records detailed biographical information about the Asuka and Nara officials, and (3) the *Nendaiki* and *Shinshiki*. They show that the Nara court's change in policy toward Gyōki took place at the beginning of the 740s.[26]

Of these three major sources, the *Shinshiki* is the most reliable because recent archeological discoveries have confirmed its accuracy. For example,

in 1990, eighty-two tiles dating back to the middle of the Nara period were discovered near the JR Yamazaki railroad station. Shimizu Miki notes that the design of the tiles and the writing on the back were quite similar to those found in Dotō-chō, Sakai-city, where the foundations for Onodera were excavated.[27] Furthermore, the tiles themselves had the characters *Jingi ninen* (the second year of the Jingi era: 725 A.D.) inscribed onto them, exactly the same date listed for the Yamazaki-in (Kusuon-in) in the *Gyōki nenpu*.[28] The *Shinshiki,* which appears at the end of the *Nendaiki,* is particularly remarkable, because it describes how most of Gyōki's forty-nine practice halls were built near large irrigation projects, bridges, and orphanages.

The *Gyōki nenpu* shows that Gyōki worked in one or two districts for two or three years at a time before moving on to a different area. Thus, his construction projects should be seen as a series of closely related projects rather than forty-nine separate road-side shelters, orphanages, and practice halls. If the *Gyōki nenpu* was completely inaccurate, why would Gyōki's movements follow a logical pattern and why would many locations that are listed in the *Gyōki nenpu* correspond with places where temples actually stand today? A more appropriate question to consider would seem to be whether enough evidence can link the road-side shelters, irrigation canals, and temples to Gyōki specifically. Although the tiles and wood used to build the irrigation canals and practice halls of the *Gyōki nenpu* date back to the eighth century, finding additional textual evidence that confirms Gyōki as the director of these projects is more difficult. After all, those who constructed temples during the first half of the eighth century probably wanted to increase their fame by identifying themselves with a great monk like Gyōki, so possibly the number of construction projects attributed to Gyōki grew rapidly after his death.

The texts that we have examined in this chapter are the most important texts that narrate Gyōki's life. However, numerous other medieval biographies and tales, such as the *Tales of Times Now Past* (*Konjaku monogatari shū*), *Sand and Pebbles* (*Shaseki shū*), and *Tales of Ancient Matters* (*Kojidan*), also include Gyōki's account. In Chapter 6, we discuss in more detail how these texts highlighted certain motifs and issues regarding Gyōki's shamanic powers.

A review of all the important primary texts discussed in this chapter makes evident that most of the images and activities that one associates with Gyōki come from medieval hagiographic texts. The circumstances surrounding Gyōki's ordination, the nature of his construction projects, and his relation with Emperor Shōmu are important issues that are not discussed in any of the earliest texts. The problem with the scholarship of most historians of early Japanese Buddhism is that they tend to present

the medieval hagiographic interpretations of Gyōki's activities as factual information. As we can see throughout this book, some serious contradictions exist between the early and medieval sources, so relying exclusively on texts from a single period is not appropriate for uncovering glimpses of the "historical" figure. For example, the limited accounts from the Nara period suggest that Gyōki tried to keep a certain distance from the imperial court until the end of his life, but such early medieval texts as the *Ōjō gokurakuki* and the *Gyōki bosatsuden* indicate that Gyōki was always on good terms with the Nara authorities. This kind of ambiguity should warn readers against making definitive claims about Gyōki's relation with the court on the basis of a limited number of texts.

3

GYŌKI AND THE *SŌNIRYŌ*

Violations of early monastic regulations in Japan

The preaching, begging, and soliciting that Gyōki supposedly conducted before he started constructing relief facilities has been debated during the past few decades among the leading scholars of early Japanese Buddhism. The *Shoku nihongi* (797) and the *Ryō no shūge* (868) associate Gyōki with the most blatant violations of the regulations described in the *Laws for Monks and Nuns* (*Sōniryō*). The imperial court established the *Sōniryō* at the beginning of the eighth century as a control mechanism over the Buddhist monastic community. Yoshida Yasuo argues that Gyōki's violations of these regulations threatened the very foundations of the externally imposed governmental regulations for the Buddhist network.[1] Were the activities of Gyōki and his followers anomalous?

The imperial edict of 717 condemns Gyōki in the following way:

> These days the small-minded monk, Gyōki, and his band of followers gather in the streets and falsely teach that there is profit in crime. They conspire and form cliques, strip the skin off their fingers and elbows to burn, go from door to door instructing laypeople and force them to make donations. They also falsely claim to be enlightened, and thus deceive the masses. Both monks and laypeople have become confused and abandon their work. People actively disregard the Buddha's teachings and violate secular laws.
>
> (*Shoku nihongi*: 04/717)

To comprehend the full implications of the "crimes" that Gyōki and his followers committed is difficult without a good understanding of the *Sōniryō* and the newly established Buddhist institutions that were supposed to enforce these monastic regulations. We will need to determine (1) what the Nara court hoped to gain from imposing a strict set of regulations on the Buddhist clergy, (2) why it was necessary for the

compilers of the *Sōniryō* to modify the Tang Chinese system, and (3) why Gyōki, who was accused of violating the most important regulations of the *Sōniryō*, escaped punishment. These are important issues, because they reveal the difficulty of putting the new laws imposed by the state into practice. Although such historians as Futaba Kenkō and Sakuma Ryū have characterized Nara Buddhism as an exclusive state-sponsored religion that carefully monitored the training and ordination of Buddhist monks, the organization of the *Sōniryō* reveals numerous difficulties that monastic authorities faced when trying to enforce these regulations.

The establishment of the *Sōniryō*

To understand the Nara court's criticism of Gyōki's activities, no better source exists than the *Sōniryō* and its Heian commentaries. The twenty-seven articles of the *Sōniryō* were first presented and explained to a group of monks at Daian temple in 701. Most of these regulations made clear to monks and nuns that they would lose their privileged status as state officials if they became involved in secular matters. However, for monks, who traveled between their temples and the imperial court, avoiding interaction with commoners and secular officials was almost impossible. Gyōki first appears in the Nara official history, *Shoku nihongi*, in the fourth month of 717 as a renegade monk who had led his followers into violating many important monastic regulations. What is most interesting about the 717 edict is that it is composed of terms and phrases taken from the *Sōniryō*.[2]

To preserve Buddhist monks' exclusive status as official ritualists of the Nara court, the *Sōniryō* tried to limit the performance of monastic activities to within Buddhist temples and the imperial court. The first part of Article 5, which Gyōki was accused of violating, states that "Monks and nuns who reside outside of temples, build practice halls (*dōjō*), gather and preach to the masses shall be laicized. Those who falsely claim that there is profit in crime and individuals who harass their monastic superiors shall also be laicized."[4] Although these four crimes are lumped together in this article, the state authorities did not seem to consider all of them to be equally serious. In fact, committing one of the crimes listed here did not usually result in laicization. Violating two or more of these crimes caused monks to be laicized. One of the five commentators of the *Sōniryō*, who identifies himself as Ryōshaku Shōinshi, explains that even if monks gathered and instructed laypeople, as long as they did not urge them that there was profit in crime, they could avoid laicization.[5] Similarly, the *Gikai* commentator claimed that monks could build practice halls without being laicized if they did not preach to the masses.[6] However, as we see

Table 3.2 Gyōki's crimes and the *Sōniryō*[3]

Crime	*Corresponding Article*	*Punishment*
Gathering in the streets and preaching that there is profit in crime	Article 5	Laicization
Forming cliques	Article 4	100 days of labor
Burning elbows and fingers	Article 27	Trial by secular law
Instructing laypeople	Article 23	100 days of labor
Forcing donations	Article 5	Not mentioned
Deceiving the masses and claiming to be enlightened	Article 1	Laicization and trial by secular law

in Chapter 4, enforcing these regulations was extremely difficult, as monks frequently traveled between their temples and the imperial court and inevitably interacted with laypeople.

Possibly Gyōki and his band of followers also violated Article 2 of the *Sōniryō*, because right after condemning Gyōki as being a worthless monk, the imperial edict warned monks and nuns against entering the houses of commoners and using divination and other efficacious rituals to cure illness.[7] Article 2 states that "Monks and nuns who use divination, petty tricks, and other magical practices to cure illness, shall all be laicized. However, the state will not restrict monks who rely on the Buddhist law to help the sick through prayers."[8] Monks and nuns often enhanced their wealth and social status through their knowledge in medicine. According to the *Shoku nihongi,* an obscure monk by the name of Hōren first received eighty *chō* of land in his hometown of Toyosaki in the ninth month of 703 for his medical expertise. Then, eighteen years later, he was granted the third imperial rank and the surname Usa for his understanding of Buddhism and medical services. Emperor Genshō's edict states that "Hōren's mind is always in a state of meditation and his actions are in accordance with the law. His knowledge of medicine is exceptional. This good monk has alleviated the sufferings of many commoners. How can I not reward him!" (*Shoku nihongi*: 06/721). Genbō (?–746), who held the highest position in the central monastic office during Gyōki's lifetime, and Dōkyō (?–772), who became the "dharma king" (*hōō*) in the 760s, were also favored by the imperial court for treating members of the imperial family through prayer and special Buddhist rituals.

Evidence exists that monks were actually laicized for performing divination rituals.[9] The *Shoku nihongi* records that in the eighth month of 701, three Korean immigrant monks were laicized for crimes that are not explicitly mentioned but probably involved divination, because they were described as being skilled in Yingyang rituals (*Shoku nihongi*: 08/

02/701). In 714, an immigrant monk called Gihō was stripped of his monastic title because he had performed divination (*Shoku nihongi*: 03/713).[10] Yoshida Yasuo argues that the Nara court was not trying to prohibit all forms of divination. The imperial officials were trying to separate the roles of Buddhist priests and Yingyang diviners, which had not been clearly defined during the Asuka period.[11]

The central government tried to restrict interactions between the public and the clergy. According to the *Shoku nihongi*, Gyōki was alleged to have ignored these regulations by begging in the streets. The second half of Article 5 explicitly states that "Those who want to beg should have the 'three administrators' (*sangō*) submit a petition to the district and provincial officials." The Gikai commentator of the *Sōniryō* explains that the three administrators would first evaluate whether an individual actually was required to take up begging.[12] Once they approved, the final decision was up to the district and provincial officials. The procedure was even more complicated for monks who lived in the capital. First the three administrators would sign the petition, then the "central monastic office" (*sōgō*) would have to approve, and finally the bureau of alien and Buddhist affairs (*genbaryō*) would be notified. The Shu commentator adds to this regulation that the ministry of civil affairs (*jibushō*) usually made the final decision.[13]

Another fear of the imperial court was the formation of monastic cliques that the Kōki commentator of the *Sōniryō* defines as a group of monks who ignore the chief abbot to set up their own agendas. The *Shoku nihongi* used sections of Article 4 to accuse Gyōki of causing social unrest. Article 4 states that "If monks form cliques and confuse other monks, or if they insult the three administrators and elders, they will receive 100 days of monastic punishment."[14] The Nara court would not allow any cliques or sects outside the "five lineages" of Buddhist study, which were established in 718. The Gikai commentator explains that the subversive cliques mentioned in Article 5 were primarily concerned with removing or ostracizing their temple authorities and other monks who held important positions.

Such scholars as Nakai Shinkō and Inoue Kaoru use the term *shidosō* to refer to unlicensed monks, but how were the *shidosō* distinguished from other monks and what kind of penalties did the *Sōniryō* prescribe to control these groups of defiant monks?[15] Although *shidosō* are not explicitly mentioned in the official histories until the reign of Shōmu (724–749), one can assume that these monks were a source of trouble for the government from the latter half of the seventh century, when Tenmu began to enforce the new land tax system.[16] With the added burdens of taxes and corveé labor, many individuals seem to have avoided their

responsibilities by pretending that they were ordained monks. Article 16 of the *Sōniryō* warns that "A monk or nun who deceptively gives his or her monastic names to another person for the sake of convenience shall be laicized, and then punished by civil law. Others involved in the crime will also receive the same punishment." This passage does not mention *shidosō* but presents no difficulty in imagining laypeople using names they received from monks and pretending to be monks themselves. The Ryōshaku commentator in the *Ryō no shūge* explains that giving one's monastic name to another person was accomplished by privately transferring one's vow permit to another individual. In some cases, these vow permits were even sold so that laypeople could certify themselves as registered monks.[17] According to the Anaki commentator of the *Sōniryō*, because laypeople could not be laicized, their punishment was one year of hard labor.

Article 22 defines the punishments for *shidosō* and those associated with them:

> Unlicensed monks (*shidosō*), those who fallaciously adopt monk's names, as well as those who continue to wear monk's attire after being laicized should be tried and punished by civil law. If religious teachers, the three administrators, or those who share residence with these people know about their crimes, they should also be laicized. Even those who do not share residence with them will be subject to 100 days of monastic labor, if they are aware of the situation and condone it for more than one night. Furthermore, if monks and nuns allow runaways to stay with them for more than one night, they shall receive 100 days of monastic labor. In cases where the crimes are even more serious, these monks and nuns should be tried by civil law.

This article differentiates between *shidosō* and laypeople who pretend to be monks. The Ryōshaku commentator states that in this article, *shidosō* refers to monks who took monastic vows themselves without official permission. According to the Gikai commentator, the people pretending to be monks sometimes acquired their monastic names by adopting the names of religious masters who had passed away.[18] This seems to have been a fairly common practice, as Article 20 gives detailed instructions about reporting the deaths of monks and nuns to the three administrators and the provincial governor to prevent laypeople from using their monastic names. According to Yoshida Yasuo and Inoue Mitsusada, the *shidosō* received the most severe punishments because they questioned the state's central authority over the newly created Buddhist institutions.[19] Never-

theless, the state's threats seemed to have had little effect on the *shidosō,* as such official histories as the *Shoku nihongi* show that *shidosō* continued to be active in religious activities into the latter part of the eighth century.

Interpreting the *Sōniryō*

Another important issue that must be addressed is whether the *Sōniryō* gave the monastic officials the authority to carry out punishments against monks and nuns who violated the new regulations. Nemoto Seiji, Naobayashi Futai, and Nakai Shinkō have addressed this question by considering the circumstances regarding the compilation of the *Sōniryō*. To interpret the *Sōniryō* is very difficult for us without a reliable commentary or evidence from other documents that shows that these regulations were actually implemented. In 868, a thirty-volume commentary on the *Ritsuryō*, known as the *Commentary on the Civil Statues* (*Ryō no shūge*), was compiled. These commentaries explained that the *Sōniryō* was modeled after a set of Chinese state regulations for Buddhist and Daoist monks, called the *Daosengge.* Unfortunately, these important sets of laws from the Tang dynasty (618–907) have not survived in complete form.[20] Such scholars as Futaba Kenkō have reassembled insofar as possible the original Chinese regulations based on citations from the *Ryō no shūge*.

The title *Daosengge* appears in an early Tang biography of the eminent monk Xuanzang, called the *Biography of Xuangzang of Dacien Temple* (*Daciensi sancangfashi zhuan*).[21] In this biography, the narrator states that Buddhist and Daoist monks felt threatened that they would be tried under secular law, because the Chinese court frequently accused them of being unruly. Consequently, Xuanzang wrote a request to the court suggesting that these monks be tried under the "old regulations" for monks and nuns instead. Michihata Ryōshū claims that the "old regulations" referred to the *Daosengge* or an earlier version of it.[22]

On the basis of this passage in Xuanzang's biography, it seems that during the early years of the Tang dynasty, the state was not content with the regulations of the *Daosengge*. A debate was waged over whether to implement a new set of regulations. Although very little information is available about the circumstances that produced these Chinese regulations in the seventh century, the Tang court feared that groups of monks and nuns who preached outside their temples might lead the masses to revolt. As a result, the court made rigid distinctions between official and non-official monks. They also seem to have tried to force monks to become religious civil servants, so they would not enjoy too much religious autonomy. By establishing a set of monastic codes, such as the *Daosengge*,

the Chinese court may have hoped to establish a legal basis for punishing unofficial monks who preached to the masses, dwelled outside temples, and performed various unapproved rites. The Tang court seems to have justified its crackdown on rebellious monks by arguing that the unofficial monks were "confusing the people," a phrase that also appears in the Japanese *Sōniryō*.[23]

The compilers of the Japanese *Sōniryō* seem to have relied on the *Daosengge* for the basic structure of their laws, but they also incorporated some unique regulations that reflect developments in Japanese Buddhist institutions from the time of Empress Suiko. First of all, the *Dao* of the *Daosengge* referred to regulations for Daoist monks, and these clauses were excluded from the Japanese *Sōniryō*. The Japanese compilers could have simply replaced the regulations for Daoist monks with rules for Shinto priests. Instead, however, they created a separate body of laws, called the *Laws for Kami Affairs* (*Jingiryō*), which gave Shinto priests special protection from the kind of punishments that could be inflicted on Buddhist monks and nuns.[24]

An important note is that the *Daosengge* were "supplementary regulations" (*ge*) set up to interpret and implement penal codes.[25] The Japanese compilers of the Taihō civil and penal codes were probably aware that the *Daosengge* were not the main penal codes. So, to strengthen their own codes, the Japanese compilers elevated the status of their *Sōniryō* by making them part of the main statutes and civil regulations (Chinese: *ling*; Japanese: *ryō*) of the central government.

In most of the passages of the Japanese *Sōniryō*, one can find the *Daosengge* article from which it was taken and modified. However, as Nakai Shinkō points out, the precedents for seven of the twenty-seven articles in *Sōniryō* cannot be found in the *Daosengge.*[26] This could simply mean that the corresponding passages of the *Daosengge* were not discussed by the seven commentators of the *Ryō no shūge*, even though they actually existed in the original version of the *Daosengge*.

What seems more likely is that at least four of the twenty-seven articles were Japanese regulations that did not exist in the *Daosengge* and were added by the compilers of the *Ritsuryō* to meet the needs of the Asuka court.[27] For example, Article 25 of the *Sōniryō* banished monks and nuns to a temple in a remote province if they committed serious crimes three times or more.[28] Although an article on banishment may have existed in the *Daosengge,* the geopolitical division between the *kinai* (Settsu, Yamato, Kawachi, Izumi) and the capital would not have been applicable to China during the sixth century, as it had more than one geopolitical center. Article 19, which required traveling monks and nuns to dismount and cover their faces when meeting an official of the third rank or higher,

also seems to be a Japanese practice that was not included in the *Daosengge*.[29] Furthermore, Article 6 allowed Japanese monks and nuns to have servants under the age of seventeen.[30] Perhaps a similar article did not appear in the Chinese regulations, because the Japanese lawmakers were trying to legalize the tradition of "semi-servants" (*bemin*) that had existed before the state even started sponsoring Buddhism.

The most important difference between the *Daosengge* and the *Sōniryō* is that the *Sōniryō* seem to have been targeted against rebellious Buddhist monks, whereas the *Daosengge* lumped Daoist and Buddhist priests together. The wording of many articles in the *Sōniryō* indicates that already many self-ordained Buddhist monks were disobeying state officials at the beginning of the eighth century. Another difference is that Japanese regulations placed the central monastic office (*sōgō*) at the top of the monastic hierarchy or at least in the central administrative position. In most cases, the abbot (*jōza*), rector (*jishu*), and superintendent (*tsuina*) of each temple were supposed to report the crimes of monks and nuns to the central monastic office.[31] If the three administrators failed to report these crimes and carry out the appropriate punishments, they also could be punished. The authority of the three administrators that is defined in the *Sōniryō* is unique because these high-ranking monks were permitted to carry out punishments against monks who committed the most serious crimes.[32]

The compilers of the Japanese regulations apparently wanted to preserve the monastic offices that had existed before the large-scale adoption of Chinese monastic titles. The prelate's office (*sōjō*), on which the later central monastic office was based, came into existence in 624 when the Empress Suiko issued an imperial edict ordering two monks and one lay official to fill the new positions. The *Nihon shoki* explains that Empress Suiko was enraged when she learned that an ordained monk killed his grandfather with an axe. Therefore, Suiko gathered monks and nuns from all the temples and threatened to punish the monk who had committed the crime as well as the entire monastic community. At this time, a Korean monk named Kanroku pleaded that the monastic community in Japan was still young and inexperienced, so the Empress punished the guilty monk and dismissed the rest of the monks. However, several weeks later, Suiko established the offices of prelate and secondary prelate and ordered that in the future those appointed to these positions should settle all crimes that monks and nuns commit.[33] Kanroku was chosen as the first prelate, and the three offices were consolidated during the reigns of Tenmu (r. 673–686) and Jitō (r. 690–697; *Nihon shoki*: 04/03/624). One must recognize that while the same monastic titles appear in Six dynasty records, the Chinese prelates and secondary prelates were not given such authority. The Chinese prelates during the seventh and eighth

centuries were often assigned to the provinces to manage local affairs, which were usually handled by the three administrators in Japan.[34]

The compilers of the *Daosengge* seemed to have relied on the Chinese *vinaya*, such as the *Sufenlu, Shisonglu*, and *Wufenlu*, to establish their regulations for Buddhist monks. Determining which sets of *vinaya* were available in Japan during the seventh century is extremely difficult. Because many of the crimes that appear in the *Sōniryō* are identical to those addressed in the Chinese *vinaya*, one can assume that the Japanese secular and religious authorities either chose parts of the Mahayana precepts that suited their religious agenda or integrated parts of the precepts that were already contained in the *Daosengge*. In either case, the *Sōniryō* deviated considerably from the *vinaya* in its severity of punishments.

The punishments mentioned in the *Sōniryō* include monastic labor, laicization, and trial by secular law after laicization. Not all monastic crimes required punishments. Article 12 forbids monks and nuns from entering one another's quarters, and Article 18 warns the clergy against possessing private property and other kinds of material possessions, but in both cases the punishments are not specified.[35] The punishment of labor (*kushi*) was not the equivalent to the hard manual labor that a layperson was required to perform. Monastic labor meant performing meritorious acts, such as cleaning the Buddha hall and sweeping the temple precincts according to Article 15.[36] The three administrators were responsible for overseeing monks and nuns in performing their duties during their period of punishment. The most severe penalties of laicization and trial by secular law could be imposed for seemingly trivial offenses, such as gathering outside temples, preaching to the masses, or using divination for curing illnesses.[37] These activities may have seemed threatening to the Nara court because such actions promoted interaction between the clergy and the outside world and weakened the court's attempts to monopolize the efficacious powers of the Buddhist clergy.

Punishment in the *Sōniryō*

The *Sōniryō* appears among the civil regulations of both the *Taihō Codes* and *Yōrō Codes*. The *Sōniryō* of the nonextant *Taihō Codes* (701) has been assumed to have been roughly the same as the *Sōniryō*, which appears in the *Yōrō Codes* of 717. However, the fragments of the *Taihō Codes*, which have survived through the *Ryō no shūge* commentaries, show that the content of these laws was not nearly as restrictive for the Buddhist clergy as were the *Sōniryō* of the later *Yōrō Cōdes*. Article 21 of the 701 version of the *Sōniryō* states:

> If a monk or a nun commits a crime which exceeds hard labor for punishment, that person should be sent to civil officials and tried under civil laws. If the crime deserves less than one hundred lashes, ten days of monastic punishments should take the place of ten lashes.[38]

The first part of the same article that appears in the *Yōrō Codes* uses similar phrases but qualifies the conditions of the law:

> If a monk or a nun commits a crime which exceeds one year worth of hard labor according to the civil law, that person should be laicized. A monk or a nun could be excused from the punishment of one years labor by giving up his or her ordination license. If there are additional crimes, the monk or nun should be punished according to civil law. If the crime deserves less than one hundred lashes, ten days of monastic punishments should take the place of ten lashes.

Both versions of Article 21 describe the monastic punishments that correspond with civil penalties.[39] Whereas the *Yōrō Codes* punishes the most severe crimes with laicization, the *Taihō Codes* orders monks or nuns who commit similar crimes to be tried under secular law. Being tried under civil law might seem to have been far more serious than any kind of monastic punishment, but Nakai Shinkō claims that unless monks or nuns were sentenced to be executed, once they had served their terms they were able to return to their temples.[40]

The foregoing passage from the *Yōrō Codes* mentions giving up one's vow permit (*kokuchō*) as a way of obtaining exemption from one year of hard labor, but such an act would be equivalent to losing one's status as an official monk.[41] Although in the beginning of the eighth century monks and nuns were not required to carry vow permits, an imperial edict issued in the fourth month of 720 forced all monks who had been officially registered to carry them.[42] This political development seems to have been triggered by the growing number of commoners who were becoming unlicensed monks. The imperial edict of 720 remonstrates against activities of unlicensed monks but does not propose specific punishments for them (*Shoku nihongi*: 04/720).

Laicization was by far the most serious punishment for monks and nuns, as once their names were removed from monastic registers, they would no longer be exempted from corveé labor and tax duties. Furthermore, if monks and nuns who had been economically dependent on their temples for most of their lives suddenly became commoners, they would

have no guarantee of finding housing or dependable work. Considering the heavy tax duties imposed on every layperson and the frequent plagues of the Nara period, to imagine how laicized monks and nuns would have survived outside of their temples is difficult.

The compilers of the *Sōniryō* also dedicate an article to defining the fundamental responsibilities of the Buddhist clergy. Article 4 plainly states that "Monks and nuns should respect the 'Three Treasures' (*Sanbō*) and transmit their teachings to officials." Although in this passage the transmission of the Three Treasures is limited to officials, the article does not explicitly reject commoners as being unworthy of the Three Treasures. Even though most of the articles prohibit monks from engaging in certain types of behavior, the first part of Article 13 simply states the way in which monks and nuns ought to behave: "Monks and nuns are those who practice meditation and cultivate the way. They should delight in peace and avoid contact with the secular world." As one can observe from these passages, monks and nuns were encouraged to remain in their temples unless they were summoned by the imperial court.

In her examination of the *Sōniryō*, Joan Piggott argued, "In the Buddhist cult over which the *tennō* presided, there could be no more serious crime for a monk than compromising ritual purity. Such a sacrilege risked bringing down divine wrath upon throne and realm."[43] Although the *Sōniryō* prescribed punishments for drinking alcohol and eating meat, these punishments were relatively light. Even sexual intercourse could be excused by performing ten days of monastic labor. For Nara officials who included the *Sōniryō* among their secular legal codes, inciting rebellion, becoming unruly, or preaching to the laity seem to have been far more serious crimes than violating ritual purity.

From the repeated edicts contained in the *Nihon shoki* and the *Shoku nihongi,* one can observe that the imperial court tried to monopolize the efficacious powers of the Buddhist clergy, but we see in Chapter 4 that this task was impossible.

The monastic power structure

Two more important concerns that must be addressed are how the crimes of monks and nuns were reported to higher authorities and who was actually supposed to carry out their monastic punishments. The three administrators and the central monastic office were primarily responsible for making sure that the *Sōniryō* was being implemented in the capital and the provinces. Naturally, the council of state placed certain restrictions on the central monastic office's authority. Although the central monastic office could grant monks permission to engage in special activities, such

as begging and mountain asceticism, their monastic registers (which recorded ordination and laicization) had to be passed on to the bureau of Buddhist and alien affairs (*genbaryō*) and the ministry of civil affairs (*jibushō*). Naobayashi suggests that in theory, the central monastic office and the council of state (*daijōkan*) were supposed to work together to determine the punishments for the most serious monastic crimes.

The creation of the bureau of Buddhist and alien affairs and the monastic liaison office (*sakan*) added new dimensions to the earlier system. During Suiko's and Kōtoku's reigns in the first half of the seventh century, the chief of the law (*hōtō*) had been a secular official who checked the authority of the two prelates. But during Tenmu's reign, the bureau of Buddhist and alien affairs took on this role by checking the monastic registers that the prelates kept.[44] As a bureau outside the monastic network, the bureau of Buddhist and alien affairs could impose strict regulations on the three administrators and prelates without getting involved in monastic politics. By the time the *Sōniryō* was promulgated in the eighth century, monks in the capital had to correspond frequently with the officials of the bureau of Buddhist and alien affairs, as these secular officials granted them permission to participate in mountain asceticism and begging.[45]

For specific information to be exchanged between individual temples and the central monastic office, "liaison officials" (*sakan*) were appointed. These officials represented the interests of the individual temples and, in some cases, were even part of the central monastic office. Tamura Enchō explains that these positions were created during Tenji's reign to manage temple finances.[46]

Article 14 of the *Sōniryō* lists the procedures for selecting monks of the central monastic office:

> Those selected for the three administrators should hold the rank of master of discipline (*risshi*) or above. They should perform virtuous acts and make other monks obey them. Only those venerated by both the secular and monastic communities who uphold the law should be chosen.[47]

What is striking about the central monastic office in this passage is that these high-ranking monks needed to be approved by secular officials before assuming their new titles. Since Suiko's reign, monks had been given a certain amount of autonomy in selecting their temple leaders. However, after the *Taihō* and *Yōrō* Codes were compiled, the monastic officials had to perform their duties under increased surveillance. The latter part of Article 14 states:

> Monks should nominate candidates [for the three administrators], sign the form and present it to imperial officials. If a group of corrupt [monks] get together and nominate someone who lacks virtue, they should receive 100 days of monastic punishment.

Although this passage does not state the entity to whom monks should report their nominations, Naobayashi Futai suggested that the nominations were reviewed by the bureau of Buddhist and alien affairs and the ministry of civil affairs.

Such Japanese historians as Moroto Tatsuo, Inoue Mitsusada, and Naobayashi Futai have disagreed about the three administrators' jurisdiction. Moroto asserted that the *Sōniryō* restricted the central monastic office's jurisdiction to the capital area.[48] Inoue argued that even within the capital, the central monastic office's authority was restricted by its subservient status to the bureau of Buddhist and alien affairs.[49] Naobayashi was particularly critical of Moroto's interpretation of the *Sōniryō*. Moroto derives the idea that the central monastic office were supposed to govern monks through the *vinaya* from Article 14 of the *Sōniryō,* which states that only monks who uphold the law should become part of the central monastic office. Moroto interprets "the law" (*hō*) in this passage as the precepts of the *vinaya*, but *hō* is generally associated with civil regulations.[50]

Naobayashi also rejects Moroto's idea that the central monastic office's jurisdiction was limited to the capital area. Although Article 20 of the *Sōniryō* states that the central monastic office is responsible only for recording the deaths of monks in the capital, the central monastic office was also in charge of reporting to the council of state monastic activities throughout the provinces. This meant that the central monastic office was involved in considering serious violations of monastic laws that took place in distant provincial temples.[51] As Naobayashi has pointed out, during the reigns of Tenmu and Jitō, when the *Sōniryō* was drafted, the "capital" area encompassed most of the temples in Japan. Therefore, the central monastic office might have had control over all the major temples in Japan.[52]

One must note that the foundations of the central monastic office were laid during Empress Suiko's reign to punish some monks who had committed serious crimes. The central monastic office was also responsible for making sure that no more than a few hundred monks were ordained every few years. From the state's perspective, monks were supposed to respect the *Sōniryō* above the *vinaya* or any other set of religious regulations to which they adhered. The *Sōniryō* encouraged monks to stay in their temples and perform their religious devotions to some degree.

Nevertheless, it primarily enumerated the consequences for monks who preached to the masses, formed cliques, or disobeyed the central monastic office.

The central monastic office underwent an evolution from a simple two-office bureau dominated by the interests of the Soga family to a large office that was supposed to monitor the activities of the entire monastic community. However, the council of state did not grant it absolute authority over monastic affairs to the central monastic office. The bureau of Buddhist and alien affairs also kept records of the monastic registers and administered regulations over monks living in the capital. The central monastic office may have been able to monitor the activities of monks who belonged to the major official temples, but with regard to such monks as Gyōki, who were on the fringes of the Buddhist monastic network, the task was far more complicated.

Avoiding monastic punishment

A look at the punishments prescribed for all the monastic violations that Gyōki and his followers committed (Table 2) reveals that they range from one hundred days of monastic labor to trial by secular law in addition to laicization. According to the forty-fifth injunction law of the *Yōrō Codes*, any person who committed more than two crimes deserved the most serious penalty, so it would have seemed natural that Gyōki be laicized and then tried by civil law. However, the only text that indicates that Gyōki was punished in any way is the rather unreliable fourteenth century account in the *Genkō shakusho*. In its fourteenth volume, the compiler, Kokan Shiren, states that Gyōki was put into prison for taking vows without proper authorization but was eventually released because of an amnesty. Although the *Genkō shakusho* is a less reliable text, because it was compiled more than five hundred years after Gyōki's death, the *Shoku nihongi* records that seven months after Gyōki was charged with violating the laws of the *Sōniryō*, in 11/717 Emperor Genshō granted an imperial amnesty. However, Nakai Shinkō nevertheless argues that Gyōki was likely not actually imprisoned or temporarily stripped of his monastic titles, because monastic punishments generally tended to be lighter than what was required in the *Sōniryō*.[53] Nakai shows that most monks seem to have simply been given a verbal or a written warning for their crimes.[54] The only known examples of monks being laicized for their crimes during the Nara period involved divination, as we have already seen.

When Gyōki began gathering a large group of followers, instructing laypeople, and soliciting donations at the beginning of the eighth century, the central monastic office must have eventually been notified by one of

the liaison officials or the local three administrators. The central monastic office normally would have been the authority to decide the appropriate punishment but, according to the *Shoku nihongi*, it was the Empress Genshō who issued the imperial edict admonishing Gyōki and his followers. Why was this the case?

The primary prelate at the time was Gien (?–728), a member of an immigrant kinship group from Paekche who had studied Buddhism in Silla during his younger years. Gien had studied such Hossō texts as the *Discourse on the Stages of Concentration Practices* (*Yujiashidilun*) under the guidance of Dōshō before Gyōki entered Yakushiji. In fact, a Korean scholar named Kimu Tarusu, who wrote a historical novel on Gyōki, speculates that Gyōki might have been one of Gien's disciples.[55] As Tamura Enchō explained, Japanese monks of the late Asuka and early Nara periods were influenced by the various developments in Silla Buddhism. Between 673 and 929, Japanese envoys and monks traveled to Silla forty-five times, while only thirteen missions were made to China between the seventh to tenth centuries. One should also note that twenty-six of the first thirty-six monks of the central monastic office were Korean immigrants or at least descendents of recent immigrants.[56]

Kimu Tarusu speculated that Gyōki was not punished for his crimes mentioned in the *Shoku nihongi*, because the central monastic office was composed of monks who had studied in Korea. Kimu claims that members of the central monastic office might have heard legends about Korean Hossō monks who were engaged in activities similar to those of Gyōki and convinced the ministers of the council of state that Gyōki simply deserved a warning. The fifty volumes of commentaries and essays that the Korean Faxiang monk Wonhyo (617–686) wrote, such as the *Commentary on the Golden Splendor Sutra* (*Jinguanming shu*), *Commentary on the Maitreya Sutra* (*Milujing shu*), and *Personal Insight on the Buddha of Infinite Light Sutra* (*Wuliangshoujing siji*), had apparently become popular among the Japanese monastic community before Gyōki even began attracting followers. Wonhyo was known as a popular monk who mixed with the masses and violated many of the fundamental Buddhist precepts. According to legends that appear in the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, Wonhyo would do almost anything to preach to the masses. He is believed to have dressed like a layperson and entered inns to explain Buddhist teachings.[57] Kimu claims that the central monastic office associated Gyōki's violations of the *Sōniryō* with legends about Wonhyo, but Miyagi Yōichirō is skeptical about Kimu's and Tamura's views because, unlike Wonhyo, Gyōki was not primarily known as an exegete.[58] We actually know next to nothing about the content of Gyōki's preaching, so to

compare him to Wonhyo—who is thought to have dedicated his life to preaching and explaining Faxiang texts—is somewhat inappropriate.

Because evidence that explains why Gyōki might have escaped punishment does not exist, the arguments that many scholars have provided are not entirely reliable. Nakamura Takao suggests that Gyōki's popularity and charisma protected him against the pressures of the *Ritsuryō* state.[59] The argument that Gyōki might have been offered the protection of local clans (*gōzōku*) seems the most plausible. Hōjō Katsutaka explained that many of Gyōki's construction projects took place near the headquarters of the Hata (Kii District, Yamashiro Province) and Haji (Tajihi District, Kawachi Province) kinship groups. *Records of the Senior Primary Prelate (Daisōjōki)* explains that one of Gyōki's ten closest disciples was a member of the Hata kinship group. Hōjō also pointed out that the Hata kinship group had sponsored various Buddhist projects since the time of Prince Shōtoku.[60] According to the *Gyōki nenpu*, Gyōki built bridges and practice halls in Kii district where the Hata clans had considerable influence. Nevertheless, not a single text directly discusses these clans' participation in Gyōki's projects.

The argument by Tamura Enchō and Kimu Tarusu that the central monastic office's knowledge of Korean ascetics and monastic precedents saved Gyōki from being punished lacks sufficient proof. Quite simply, not enough texts demonstrate the importance of such ascetic movements in Japan during the Nara period. By the middle of the eighth century, the Japanese central monastic office did not rely on Korean precedents to govern its monastic community. In theory, the decision to excuse Gyōki from his punishments should also have been determined by the central monastic office. After all, the *Sōniryō* stipulates that the central monastic office should have a say in deciding the penalty for the most serious crimes. If the forty-fifth injunction law, which stipulates that any person who commits more than two crimes should receive the most serious penalty, had been carried out, Gyōki should have been laicized and tried by secular law. However, none of the histories or commentaries suggests that Gyōki received any punishment. In fact, in 722 the court issued another warning against monks and nuns who were breaking the same monastic regulations as those violated by Gyōki and his followers. In other words, seemingly a growing number of monks and nuns were gathering and preaching to people outside their temples, and neither the central monastic office nor the council of state seemed to have been able to control them. In Chapter 4, we see that the state may have recognized that the practice halls, road-side shelters, and bridges that Gyōki built actually helped to strengthen the new legal system and made it function more smoothly.

4

GYŌKI AND THE POLITICS OF THE NARA COURT

The relation between Gyōki's charitable activities and the politics of the Nara court has recently received attention from such historians as Miyagi Yōichirō and Inoue Mitsusada. Both of them analyzed the locations of Gyōki's activities on a yearly basis and compared them to the construction activities of the Nara court.[1] But the only texts that describe Gyōki's construction projects in detail are the *Gyōki bosatsuden* (eleventh century) and the *Gyōki nenpu* (1175). In this chapter, we analyze the official accounts of Gyōki's life as contained in the *Shoku nihongi* and other fragmentary texts to pinpoint the incidents that might have caused the Nara court to alter its policy toward Gyōki and his followers.

Gyōki seems to have been most active in his charitable projects when the imperial court was suffering a series of terrible disasters.[2] Emperor Shōmu was constantly caught between political cliques, such as the Fujiwara and Tachibana, who tried to dominate the council of state and marry their daughters to him, so that they would have a say in choosing his successor. As a result, during the 740s, the emperor seemingly withdrew from imperial politics to a certain extent and devoted himself to Buddhist projects, such as the construction of provincial temples and the giant Vairocana Buddha statue. The relation between Emperor Shōmu and Gyōki has been taken up in recent studies, but the actual texts that narrate their encounters during the Nara period provide only sketchy descriptions. We must investigate the extent to which their relation is something invented by modern scholars.

Perspectives on the *ritsuryō* system

Gyōki's activities during the Yōrō era (717–724) took place around the same time as the formation of the so-called "Ritsuryō state" (*Ritsuryō kokka)*. Many Japanese and Western historians have been using the term *ritsuryō kokka* since the Second World War to describe the first centralized

administrative structure that was created in Japan. However, up to this day, few agree over the nature of its legal system or how long it continued to function. As a comprehensive discussion of these issues would exceed the scope of this book, the focus of this section is limited to the legal structures of the Nara court which affected Gyōki's activities.

The most common definition of the *Ritsuryō kokka* is a government whose legal structures were based on a set of penal and administrative codes applied uniformly throughout the nation. The Chinese Sui (581–619) and Tang (618–907) courts used "administrative codes" (Chinese: *ling*; Japanese: *ryō*) to define the responsibilities of imperial officials and warn people with the "penal codes" (Chinese: *lu*; Japanese: *ritsu*) if they failed to fulfill their duties to the state. The earliest administrative codes in Japan, known as the *Kiyomigahara Codes*, were compiled during the reign of Emperor Tenmu (r. 673–686) and revised during Empress Jitō's reign (r. 687–697). The only thing that is known about these no-longer-extant codes is that they were based on the Tang *Yonghui* codes, which were probably brought over by Japanese envoys during their visit to China in 653.[3] Two other versions of the *Ritsuryō* were compiled in 701 and 718. The *Shoku nihongi* states that the Taihō codes of 701 were distributed to all the provinces in 10/02/702, but only fragments of these codes survive in Heian commentaries. The Yōrō codes of 718, which consist of twenty volumes, form the most complete version of the *Ritsuryō* that survives today.

Why have previous historians put so much emphasis on the *Ritsuryō* system? The *Ritsuryō* codes have generally been perceived to have defined the form and size of the new bureaucratic network and spelled out the specific duties and responsibilities of all ranks and social classes, from local peasants and monks up to the imperial ministers. Those who subscribe to this theory claim that by placing the emperor at the top of the ritual hierarchy and requiring his subjects to pledge allegiance, the highest officials brought the local elite under the newly centralized authority of the imperial court. The problem with this approach is that it assumes that the *Ritsuryō* codes were actually implemented on a national scale during the Nara period (710–784). The Yōrō codes that were edited so laboriously were not enacted until three decades after their compilation – in the year 757. Furthermore, as Felicia Bock pointed out in her translation published three decades ago, for the Nara court, which had only recently begun compiling written laws, interpreting and enforcing the vague regulations of the *Ritsuryō* were difficult. Bock argued that individual regulations set up for interpreting and implementing the penal regulations (*kyaku*) and supplementary laws that helped to amplify the civil and religious

regulations (*shiki*) were needed to implement the *Ritsuryō* fully.[4] These regulations were not created until the beginning of the Heian period.[5]

Conversely, one should not go so far as to claim that the *Ritsuryō* system was not in operation until the Heian period, because the *Shoku nihongi* shows that many peasants suffered under the increased responsibilities defined by the *Ritsuryō* codes (*Shoku nihongi*: 09/04/711. Perceiving the Japanese *Ritsuryō* system as a bureaucratic network that served the interests of the Asuka-Nara courts is also possible. The compilation of the *Ritsuryō* codes was first begun during Emperor Tenmu's reign (673–686). In 663, the Japanese naval force suffered a loss of four hundred ships against the Tang-Silla alliance in the *Hakusukinoe no tatakai* (Battle of Kum River).[6] The *Nihon shoki* contains some entries that indicate that the Japanese emperors of the next three decades seem to have been fearful that the expanding Chinese empire might attack them for getting involved in the Korean conflict, so they built fortifications stretching from Tsushima to northern Kyushu and devoted their energy toward expanding their military networks.[7]

For the Japanese imperial court to cope with this crisis, they needed a strong military and an efficient bureaucratic network that could maximize their manpower and extract large sums in taxes. Emperors Tenji, Tenmu, and Jitō no doubt found the *Ritsuryō* codes useful for ensuring domestic security, but emergency laws and measures enforced during a state of political crisis could not be expected to function for centuries without major revisions. As the imperial court used the *Ritsuryō* codes to squeeze as much tax and corveé labor out of the populace as possible, what became clear is that peasants could not meet these demands. William Farris has convincingly shown in his demographic study of ancient Japan that the first half of the eighth century was a period of mass migrations. These migrations were most likely caused by the state's inability to readjust its legal system and land policy, when epidemics were becoming a more serious threat than foreign invasions.[8] Thus, the sudden implementation of the *Ritsuryō* structures ended up burdening the average peasant and laborer, even though the imperial court benefited from it. Such scholars as Inoue Kaoru, Yoshida Yasuo, and Miyagi Yōichirō all claim that these factors had a direct impact on Gyōki's charitable activities.

The beginning of Gyōki's charitable activities

According to the *Gyōki nenpu*, the first of the forty-nine practice halls (*in*) that Gyōki built was completed in 705 in the Ōtori district, Izumi province.[9] The *Shoku nihongi* and other texts from the eighth century tell

us next to nothing about Gyōki's activities before this year. Not surprisingly, the beginning of Gyōki's construction projects might have coincided with the state's efforts to implement a systematic tribute and corveé labor system. The burdens of the local peasants had been increasing dramatically since the minister, Fujiwara Fuhito (659–720), ordered the construction of a new capital in Nara in 708.[10] The Heijō capital was meant to be the testing grounds for the *Ritsuryō* codes that Fuhito had painstakingly compiled, but its implementation seems to have been too sudden for the peasants to accommodate. Under the new tax laws, every peasant outside the capital area was required to submit rice (*so*); regional produce, such as grain and cotton (*chō*); and silk and salt (*yō*).[11] The *so* was usually delivered to the provincial headquarters, but the *chō* and the *yō* had to be transported to Nara.[12] Initially, the *yō* was submitted by those who wanted to be excused from corveé labor. However, while the capital was under construction, men between the ages of twenty-one and sixty (*seitei*) were required to serve sixty days a year in various construction projects.

By the ninth month of 711, peasant laborers were beginning openly to resist their new responsibilities. The *Shoku nihongi* states that "laborers from various provinces have become fatigued and many of them have escaped. We have tried to stop them, but they continue to run away" (*Shoku nihongi*: 09/04/711). Those who deserted were severely punished if they were caught. Ten days of desertion usually deserved ten lashes, and runaway peasants could receive up to one hundred lashes.[13]

Those who traveled to the capital to submit their taxes were even worse off. Most of the peasants had to drag their produce along primitive roads and had access only to horses and carts when they were right outside the capital. Furthermore, sea transport was not allowed for those traveling from the Southern Sea (Kii, Sanuki, Tosa) and Transmountain (Tamba, Tango, Izumo) districts until 757 (*Shoku nihongi*: 10/07/757). The state also discriminated between those who submitted rice and those who delivered special goods, such as salt and yarn. Those who brought precious commodities were guaranteed food along their journey, but the average peasant had to rely on his or her own food supply (*Shoku nihongi*: 03/25/724).[14]

Making sure that the peasants reached the capital was basically in the state's interest. But once the peasants submitted their taxes and fulfilled their duties, the state took little responsibility for the welfare of the laborers and peasants. "Many of the laborers who arrive from provinces have run out of food on their way home and are starving at the side of the road" (*Shoku nihongi*: 01/16/712). By the tenth month

of 712, the imperial court seemed to have realized the gravity of the situation:

> There is no way for the laborers and peasants delivering their produce to obtain food on their journey home. The local districts should divide up their rice supply and store it in other places, so that the traveling laborers and peasants can freely trade. [Officials] should also give some money to these people in order to alleviate their burdens and instruct them on how best to make use of it.
>
> (*Shoku nihongi*: 10/29/712)

The state could achieve these reforms only with the cooperation of the powerful families (*gōzoku*) and provincial governors. In 713, the imperial court ordered the *gōzoku* and governors to lay their surplus grains and rice at the side of the road, so that weary laborers could purchase them (*Shoku nihongi*: 03/19/713). However, because similar entries describing the pitiful conditions of traveling laborers and peasants continue to appear in the *Shoku nihongi*, this injunction was not likely carried out on a large scale. What is interesting for our purpose is that the *Tenpyō jusannenki* suggests that Gyōki's construction projects began around the time when peasants were being forced to submit their taxes to the capital and to participate in heavy corveé labor.

The first project in which Gyōki participated was the construction of Daisue-in, according to the *Gyōki nenpu*. This facility was discovered in the southern part of what is now called Takakura, where more than two hundred pottery kilns were also excavated. Substantial archeological evidence suggests that Korean immigrants established a pottery-producing village in Takakura dating back to the early fifth century. The Chinese character "sue" in Daisue-in means "pottery," so Gyōki's first temple may have served the potters of the region. Tamura Enchō claims that this first facility that Gyōki undertook to construct was not a temple (*tera*). Temples usually have a meditation hall and an altar or a pagoda, but no textual or archeological evidence can show that Gyōki's practice halls possessed such buildings.[15] More likely, the "in" were communal buildings where local residents could gather and listen to lectures and practice meditation, as the *Shoku nihongi* describes the forty-nine *in* as practice halls (*dōjō*) rather than temples (*Shoku nihongi*: 02/749).

An important question that frequently comes up in discussing Gyōki's construction projects is whether Gyōki himself was skilled in building dikes and bridges. The eminent monk, Dōji (?–744), who studied in China, was well-known for his skill in temple construction, so equally possible

is that he transmitted his knowledge to other Hossō monks.[16] Gyōki's biography in the *Shoku nihongi* states that "he personally led his disciples to treacherous spots and built bridges and dikes" (*Shoku nihongi*: 02/ 749). Inoue Kaoru explained that Gyōki's teacher, Dōshō, who was descended from the Paekche immigrant family Fumi, knew a great deal about construction, so he probably transmitted this knowledge to his closest disciples.[17] Besides, a person without any expertise in construction likely would not have been able to induce the powerful clans and local farmers to participate in large scale construction projects. The sites listed in the *Gyōki nenpu* cannot always be associated with Gyōki, as no archeological evidence indicates that Gyōki himself took part in the construction, but the *Shoku nihongi*'s descriptions of the widespread social misery brought about by the attempts to implement the *Ritsuryō* codes strictly during a time of national defense makes highly probable that Gyōki constructed bridges, road-side shelters, and practice halls to alleviate the situation.

From condemnation to toleration

The year 731 seems to have marked the beginning of radical shift in the imperial court's attitude toward Gyōki and his followers:

> It has been decided that lay men (*ubasoku*) over sixty-one and lay women (*ubai*) over the age of fifty-five who work under Gyōki *hōshi* will be allowed to become monks if they act in accordance with the law. Anybody else who goes around with their begging bowl shall be reported to the regional officials and punished. However, those who have lost their parents or spouse will be permitted to engage in ascetic activities for up to a year.
>
> (*Shoku nihongi*: 08/7/731)

The most striking thing about this passage is that the court actually revised its stance by addressing Gyōki as "dharma master" (*hōshi*). The first imperial warning issued against Gyōki and his followers in the fourth month of 717 described him as a "small monk" (*kosō*). The imperial court may have used this term, because Gyōki was merely a *shami* when the court first criticized his behavior. The *Nihon ryōiki* (822?) and *A Short Record of Japan* (*Fusōryakki*: 1094) both explain that Gyōki never took his final vows.[18]

Allowing the oldest members of Gyōki's disciples to be fully ordained was the state's way of partially recognizing the legitimacy of Gyōki and

his followers. Inoue Kaoru argues that the officials in the council of state (*daijōkan*) probably realized that to portray Gyōki as a law-abiding member of the official monastic establishment was more beneficial than to continue to punish him and alienate the powerful clans and peasants who supported him.[19] The foregoing imperial edict does not specify whether the "law" refers to the civil laws or the *Sōniryō*. Furthermore, a latter section of the 717 edict suggests that the state was reluctant to admit all of Gyōki's disciples into the official monastic community. The edict includes a section on mourning lay believers, as some of the followers probably took advantage of their spouses' death to neglect their tax and corveé labor duties.

Miyagi Yōichirō claims that the end of Fujiwara Fuhito's and Prince Nagaya's leadership brought greater tolerance toward Gyōki's activities.[20] In 04/717, the imperial court issued the warning against Gyōki and his followers, as they could not afford to have Gyōki blatantly violate the new laws of the *Ritsuryō* codes that Fujiwara Fuhito had painstakingly compiled. When Fujiwara Fuhito passed away in 720, Prince Nagaya (684–729), Emperor Tenmu's grandson, became the highest ranking member of the council of state. According to the *Shoku nihongi*, Prince Nagaya was a conscientious statesman who was determined to conduct state affairs according to what was specified in the *Ritsuryō* codes. While he was the minister of the right, the state issued the second warning against monks and nuns who preached to the masses (*Shoku nihongi*: 07/11/722).

Although Prince Nagaya respected Fujiwara Fuhito, he resented the Fujiwara family's influence over the emperor and tried to block their efforts to win imperial favor. When Emperor Shōmu ascended the throne in 724, Fujiwara Fuhito's sons, Muchimaro, Fusasaki, Umakai, and Maro—known as the Fujiwara four—tried to elevate their own status by convincing Emperor Shōmu to award his mother, Fujiwara Miyako, the honorary title "grand lady" (*daifujin*). Prince Nagaya objected to this proposal, because Shōmu's mother was a "commoner." Nagaya suggested that Fujiwara Miyako should be called *kōtaifujin,* a title that had been used for all previous retired emperors' wives who were not descended from the imperial family (*Shoku nihongi*: 02/724). Although Emperor Shōmu took Nagaya's advice, the Fujiwara four were infuriated by this incident and decided to oust Nagaya from the council of state. So when Emperor Shōmu's first son by his Fujiwara wife died, the Fujiwara brothers spread a rumor that Prince Nagaya was trying to usurp the throne. This mere accusation was enough to stir up suspicion in the court and, as a result, in the second month of 729, Prince Nagaya was driven by Fujiwara Umakai's troops into committing suicide (*Shoku nihongi*: 02/12/729). Emperor Shōmu seems to have been shaken by the ruthless

Table 4.1 Clan members in the council of state before and after Prince Nagaya's suicide[22]

Clan Name	*Ōishi*	*Tajihi*	*Fujiwara*	*Ōtomo*	*Abe*	*Ishikawa*
729	2	2	2	2	1	1
736	2	1	4	1	0	0

behavior of the Fujiwara family and preferred to seek the advice of the retired Empress Genshō for a while (*Shoku nihongi*: 08/729).

As soon as Prince Nagaya vanished from the political scene, Kōmyō was awarded the title "empress" (*kōgō*), which had never been granted to a "commoner" before (*Shoku nihongi*: 08/729).[21] This allowed the Fujiwara four to become Emperor Shōmu's brothers-in-law and gave them the right to help choose Shōmu's successor. After Prince Nagaya's suicide, the Fujiwara family was able to dominate the council of state, because they occupied four of the eight highest posts.

Interestingly enough, the first thing that Kōmyō set out to accomplish after becoming empress was to build a medical facility for the poor (*seyaku-in*). The *Shoku nihongi* states that Kōmyō used the wealth she had inherited from Fujiwara Fuhito as well as state funds to buy medicine and other supplies for the facility (*Shoku nihongi*: 04/730). Inoue Kaoru argues that Kōmyō pursued this charitable project with the help of the Fujiwara four to divert the attention of the council of state from their ruthless rise to power.[23] However, Hongō Masatsugu asserts that Empress Kōmyō's *seyaku-in* was inspired by Gyōki's roadside shelters (*fuseya*) and reflected her genuine devotion toward Buddhism. Kōmyō's mother's family, the Agata Inukai, was well-known for promoting Buddhist devotions in the imperial court. Kōmyō's biography in the *Shoku nihongi* states that she was the one to promote the construction of provincial temples (*kokubunji*) and Tōdaiji. She also created an office for sutra copying in her own part of the imperial palace (*Shoku nihongi*: 760).[24] Some legends even state that Kōmyō was raised in the same district as was Gyōki, which would tend to support Hongō's argument.[25]

Another reason why the state may have changed its policy toward Gyōki in 731 was because Gyōki seems to have ignored previous imperial warnings and continued to build practice halls and roadside shelters. According to the *Gyōki nenpu*, in the year 731 alone, Gyōki built more than eight temples. When one examines the locations of these sites, what is evident is that Gyōki moved away from Yamato province where the Heijō capital was located after the court issued imperial warnings in 717 and 722. Yoshida Yasuo claims that most of Gyōki's activities between 724 and 731, when the Fujiwara family was in power, took place in Settsu

province. Fujiwara Fuhito's son, Umakai, had been appointed in 10/726 to be the chief overseer of the Naniwa palace in Settsu province (*Shoku nihongi*: 10/726). Umakai made frequent visits to Naniwa between 726 and 732 when the palace was being completed.[26] Yoshida argues that Gyōki built road-side shelters and practice halls in the Naniwa vicinity during the same period.[27] Yoshida explained that Umakai might have heard about or directly witnessed Gyōki's construction of Zengen-in and Takasebashi-in, which were right outside Naniwa, and realized that his projects did not burden the state in any way. Umakai also could have convinced his brothers in the council of state that Gyōki's productive capacity could be used to benefit the state.

Emperor Shōmu's wanderings and Gyōki's activities

So far, we have focused on the imperial court's change in policy toward Gyōki. In this section, we examine the years that Japanese historians have called "Emperor Shōmu's wandering period" to see how they might have affected Gyōki's activities. The *Gyōki nenpu* suggests that from 740 to 745 Gyōki's construction projects took place in locations that were not far from the temporary capitals that Emperor Shōmu retreated to.

In 737, the Nara court encountered an unexpected turn of events. A terrible pestilence that was reported in Kyūshū quickly spread north and wiped out a large part of the population in the capital. In a matter of four months, all four of the Fujiwara brothers died, and the council of state was forced to postpone its business. Emperor Shōmu took an active role in ordering provincial officials to pray to various Shinto and Buddhist deities so that the country could get through this national crisis (*Shoku nihongi*: 08/735). While the plague was still in Kyūshū, Emperor Shōmu ordered the monks of Daian temple, Yakushi temple, Gangō temple, and Kōfuku temple to recite the *Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom* (*Dabanruo jing*), because its verses were believed to be able to expel evil spirits and ward off disaster (*Shoku nihongi*: 05/735).[28] Emperor Shōmu also declared several amnesties and exempted many provinces from their tax and corveé labor duties (*Shoku nihongi*: 05/ 735, 11/735, 08/737, 06/739). On the local level, officials dispensed "sheaf rice" (*suiko*) that the state had stored since 708 in case of an emergency. Normally, the local bureaucrats would have charged an interest on these kinds of loans, but simply too many deaths and migrations occurred to enforce such a measure.[29]

Throughout these activities, imperial edicts state that Emperor Shōmu felt personally responsible for the pitiful state of the country. "Many peasants and officials have passed away. I fear that these disasters have occurred because of my lack of virtue. I look to the heavens and feel

ashamed of myself" (*Shoku nihongi*: 08/ 737). Kimu Tarusu argued that Emperor Shōmu expressed contrition for the deaths of the Fujiwara brothers, as it was his alliance with the Fujiwara four that allowed them to drive Prince Nagaya to suicide.[30]

By 738, Emperor Shōmu managed to select the new members of the council of state. In his early years, he had been pushed around by the Fujiwara family but, as a mature adult, Emperor Shōmu decided to play a more active role in imperial politics. The highest posts in the council were occupied by Tachibana no Moroe, Empress Kōmyō's half-brother; Prince Suzuka, the brother of Prince Nagaya; and Tajihi no Hironari, all of whom were glad to see the end of Fujiwara rule.[31] This council was much easier for Emperor Shōmu to work with, as no single powerful clan held the majority.

Emperor Shōmu's new council headed by Tachibana no Moroe was far more liberal than the previous Fujiwara regime in granting the inner court ranks (fifth rank and above) to officials who did not have imperial ties or the backing of powerful clans. Both Kibi no Makibi and Genbō, who had returned from China in 735, were assigned to important posts despite the fact that they were descended from relatively obscure provincial families. Kibi no Makibi brought back several important Confucian texts, including the one hundred thirty–volume *Tang Rites* (*Tangli*). As a cultural ambassador, Makibi advised the emperor on the latest continental developments in legal codes, warfare, and music. Makibi was also chosen to be the imperial professor (*daigakunosuke*) of the court.

The monk Genbō also returned to the capital with more than five thousand scrolls of Buddhist scriptures and commentaries, and he too received a large piece of land and eight servants from the imperial court (*Shoku nihongi*: 08/735). Consequently, Emperor Shōmu personally gave Genbō a purple surplice (*kesa*) as a token of his appreciation. When the court was suffering from the worst episode of the plague in 737, Genbō was invited to perform various healing rituals for the imperial family. The *Shoku nihongi* states that Genbō's prayers actually managed to heal Emperor Shōmu's ailing mother, Fujiwara no Miyako (*Shoku nihongi*: 12/737). These services eventually won Genbō the highest monastic rank of *sōjō* (primary prelate).[32]

However, the attention that Emperor Shōmu lavished on these new members of his political circle led to one of the biggest disasters during the emperor's career. The Fujiwara family, which had lost influence in the council after the epidemic of 737, desperately wanted to regain its political ascendancy. Fujiwara no Hirotsugu, Fuhito's grandson who had been exiled to Kyūshū, sent a memorial to the imperial court in 08/740 arguing that the recent natural disasters that plagued the country were

caused by the improper conduct of the imperial court. Hirotsugu specifically stated that Kibi no Makibi and Genbō's involvement in politics had corrupted the central government and requested their immediate removal (*Shoku nihongi*: 08/740). Before the court had time to consider the matter, the *Shoku nihongi* states, Hirotsugu gathered up an army of more than ten thousand troops and headed for the capital.

The imperial court had not experienced such a large scale revolt since the Jinshin War of 672,[33] but they managed to respond by appointing Ono no Azumabito as the general of an imperial army that consisted of seventeen thousand men gathered from the Eastern Sea, Southern Sea, and Transmountain districts. Azumabito was probably chosen for this post because many discontented ethnic minority groups, such as the Hayato, had joined Fujiwara Hirotsugu's army and Azumabito had witnessed their fighting tactics in the imperial campaigns against the Emishi in northern Japan. When the imperial troops met Hirotsugu's army, Azumabito placed the Hayato soldiers, who had been stationed in the capital, at the head of their army to dissuade the ethnic minorities from cooperating with Fujiwara Hirotsugu. Nevertheless, the imperial court was apprehensive about the outcome. Several high-ranking officials were sent to the Ise Shrine to pray for an imperial victory (*Shoku nihongi*: 09/11/740). Then, on the fifteenth day of the ninth month, the emperor issued an imperial edict that ordered the copying of ten volumes from the *Avalokiteśvara Sutra* (*Guanshiyin jing*) and the erection of an image of Guanyin in every province.

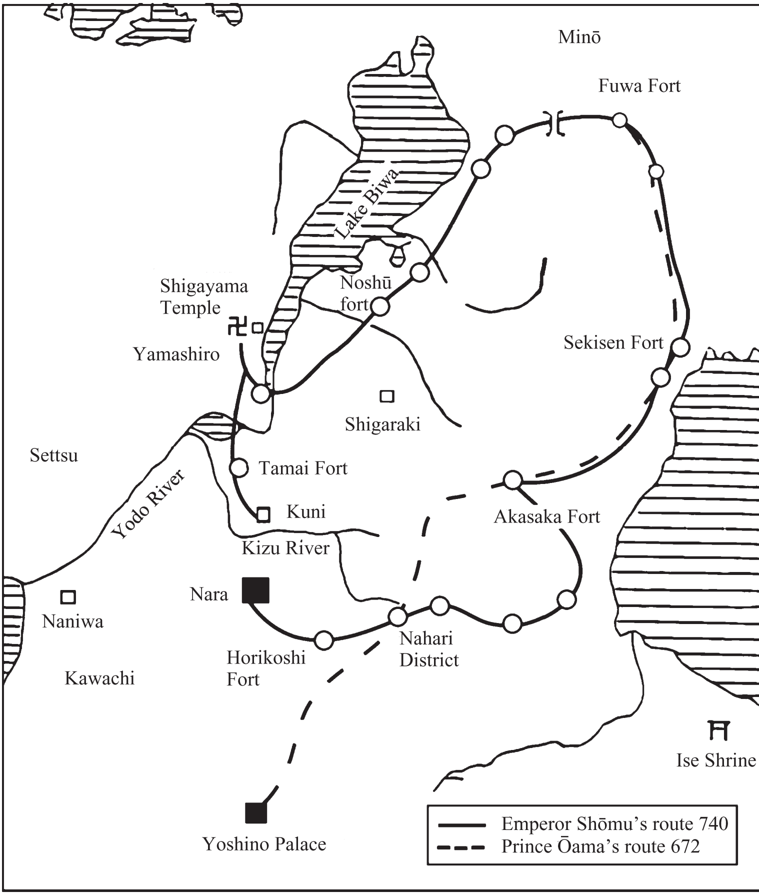
An important factor to recognize is that Hirotsugu never threatened to overthrow the emperor and the imperial family. Hirotsugu seems to have been mainly interested in reserving the highest posts in the council for the most prestigious Fujiwara clan members and imperial princes. What made the imperial court and particularly Emperor Shōmu nervous was that Hirotsugu had successfully managed to gather local chieftains and district magistrates from the Kyūshū area who had suffered most during the 737 epidemic and who blamed the imperial court for their sufferings. Such actions could incite rebellions in other provinces and even start disputes over imperial succession.[34] Azumabito's army won a major victory and captured 1,767 of Hirotsugu's troops in northern Kyūshū, but Emperor Shōmu apparently was still not satisfied with the course of events (*Shoku nihongi*: 09/740).

Therefore, on 10/26/740, Emperor Shōmu sent an imperial edict to his general explaining that he was going to leave the capital temporarily. He also told Azumabito not to be alarmed during his absence. The 740 edict simply stated that the emperor was going on a tour of the "eastern regions," but scholars such as Nomura Tadao have interpreted Emperor

Shōmu's move as an escape from the possible outbreak of a civil war in Nara.[35] In the capital, the emperor had been caught in a fierce power struggle over who should succeed him. The emperor had one son, known as Prince Asaka. He also had a daughter by Empress Kōmyō, called Princess Abe. Although both were eligible to succeed their father, Emperor Shōmu named Princess Abe as the crown princess, as he relied on Empress Kōmyō for support (*Shoku nihongi*: 01/738). This angered many of the council members, as they did not want to see the princess's Fujiwara relatives become council members again. Thus, the highest-ranking officials, including Tachibana no Moroe, who was Prince Asaka's uncle, did everything they could to prevent the princess from succeeding Emperor Shōmu. However, rather than searching for an immediate solution that could satisfy both sides, the emperor decided to leave the court and search for a location where he could set up a new political center.[36]

What started off as a brief departure from the capital turned into what Japanese scholars have called the "five year wandering period." Emperor Shōmu began his so-called eastern tour by taking the Great Eastern Sea Road (*Tōkaidō*) and staying approximately five days at each of the imperial forts. Takinami Sadako points out that Shōmu followed the same route as that of Prince Ōama during his retreat from Yoshino in the Jinshin War of 672 (see Map 4.1).[37] By retracing the steps of Prince Ōama, who had fought to regain his rightful position as crown prince and future emperor, Emperor Shōmu most likely contemplated the deepening divisions among council members that were tearing the country apart. His solution was to build a new capital seventy kilometers northeast of Nara in a town called Kuni. Such scholars as Tanoi Yasuko have considered this an erratic move, as previous capitals, such as the Heijōkyō, were neatly laid out before the imperial family moved in.[38] The full-scale construction of the Kuni capital was not undertaken until Emperor Shōmu moved in, and the entire project was abandoned three years later. It is also strange that he chose a capital that was much smaller in size and close to the former capital of Nara.

However, if one considers that Emperor Shōmu might have intended Kuni to be a temporary capital from the start, this move will seem less incomprehensible. The imperial edict contained in the *Shoku nihongi* of 12/740, which ordered Tachibana no Moroe to go ahead and make arrangements for the emperor's arrival, states that the move to Kuni "resembled a kind of relocation of imperial headquarters" (*sento*; *Shoku nihongi*: 12/06/740). This imperial edict incorporates a highly unusual usage of the verb "to resemble" (*gisu*), because the emperor probably did not intend this move to be a permanent one. A few months later, when Tachibana no



Note: A similar version of this map can be found on page 39 of *Nihon kodai gūteishakai no kenkyū*

Map 4.1 Emperor Shōmu's wandering years 740–745

Moroe asked Emperor Shōmu what would be an appropriate name for the capital "during their stay," the emperor replied that the central palace should be called Yamatokuni ōmiya (*Shoku nihongi*: 11/11/741). This passage suggests that Shōmu's most trusted officials already knew that their stay in Kuni was intended to be temporary. Takinami Sadako presents a convincing argument that Emperor Shōmu deliberately moved from one capital to the next to weaken the political cliques in Nara, which had become too powerful to ignore.[39]

According to the late Heian *Gyōki nenpu*, Gyōki's construction projects during Emperor Shōmu's wandering period were carried out in locations

not far from these new imperial capitals.[40] The *Gyōki nenpu*'s descriptions give the appearance that Gyōki was aware of the political implications that the wandering imperial court had for the local laborers and peasants. The first major difficulty that Emperor Shōmu's court encountered when building their new capital was getting their supplies from Nara across the Kizu River. According to the *Shoku nihongi* and *Gyōki bosatsuden*, Gyōki and his followers were working on the Izumi bridge and the Izumibashi-in, which were supposed to be located on the north side of the Kizu River. Unclear is whether Gyōki had been building the Izumi bridge before the arrival of the imperial court or whether his band of followers were sponsored by the state to construct the bridge from the beginning. However, for court officials who had to cross the Kizu River, the presence of Gyōki and his followers working on their project must have been impossible to ignore.

Emperor Shōmu seems to have been impatient to see Kuni become a fully operational capital. To make sure that the powerful clans and officials honored his decision to move the capital, Emperor Shōmu issued an imperial edict forbidding anybody with the fifth rank or above to reside in Nara (*Shoku nihongi*: 03/741). Despite the fact that peasants and laborers had suffered during the recent pestilence and Hirotsugu's rebellion, the emperor gathered 5,500 men from Yamato, Settsu, Yamashiro, and Kawachi provinces to help to build the new capital. Gyōki's Izumibashi-in may have been constructed for these laborers as a rest house. The interesting thing about this facility is that in 07/741, Emperor Shōmu also ordered 750 lay monks from the region to assist in its construction. After the bridge and the practice hall were completed, Emperor Shōmu allowed all these monks to become fully ordained (*Shoku nihongi*: 10/16/741). Kawasaki Yōichi argues that even though Gyōki's name does not appear in this imperial edict, the lay monks who helped in the construction must have been Gyōki's followers, as earlier edicts indicate that a large group of lay monks accompanied Gyōki in his travels.[41]

Inoue Kaoru cited the *Gyōki nenpu* to argue that Gyōki built more than one-fifth of his practice halls and roadside shelters between 740 and 749, when Tachibana no Moroe dominated the Council of State. The *Gyōki nenpu* constructs a narrative that shows that Gyōki concentrated on projects in Yamashiro and Settsu province while Emperor Shōmu wandered from one capital to the next. Yoshida Yasuo claims that the court seems to have changed its policy from passively allowing Gyōki to carry on with his projects to acting as a sponsor during the 740s.[42] The *Gyōki nenpu* and the *Gyōki bosatsuden* explain that in 03/741, the emperor visited Gyōki at the Izumibashi-in and spent the entire day in discussing various matters. The same passage also mentions that Emperor Shōmu

Table 4.2 Emperor Shōmu's and Gyōki's movements: 740–745

740	Emperor Shōmu leaves Nara (10/29)
	Emperor Shōmu visits Kuni (12/15)
	Gyōki builds Izumibashi-in (Yamashiro Province, Sōraku District)
	Gyōki builds Ryūfukuni-in (Yamashiro Province, Sōraku District)
	Gyōki builds Senfuku-in (Yamashiro Province, Kii District)
	Gyōki builds Fuse and Fuseni-in (Yamashiro Province, Kii District)
741	Emperor Shōmu visits Izumibashi-in (3/17)
742	Emperor Shōmu visits Shigaraki (first time; 8/27)
	Emperor Shōmu returns to Kuni (9/04)
	Emperor Shōmu visits Shigaraki (second time; 12/29)
743	Emperor Shōmu returns to Kuni: (1/02)
	Emperor Shōmu visits Shigaraki (third time; 4/03)
	Emperor Shōmu returns to Kuni (4/16)
	Emperor Shōmu visits Shigaraki (fourth time; 7/26)
	Gyōki encourages people to participate in the Vairocana project (10/20)
744	Emperor Shōmu visits Naniwa (1/02)
	Emperor Shōmu visits Shigaraki (fifth time; 2/24)
	Emperor Shōmu returns to Naniwa (7/08)
	Emperor Shōmu visits Shigaraki (sixth time; 11/13)
745	Emperor Shōmu returns to Nara (5/11)
	Gyōki builds Daifuku and Daifukuni-in (Settsu Province, Nishinari District)
	Gyōki builds Naniwado-in (Settsu Province, Nishinari District)
	Gyōki builds Hirakata-in (Settsu Province, Nishinari District)
	Gyōki builds Sakugabe-in (Settsu Province, Nishinari District)

granted land to Gyōki for building an orphanage (*kodokuen*). Six months later, Tachibana no Moroe also donated fifty *kō* of land to Gyōki so that he could adorn his practice halls. What is puzzling about these incidents is that the official Nara history, *Shoku nihongi*, does not mention them at all. Yoshida Yasuo suggests that because Emperor Shōmu made frequent trips to nearby regions during his stay in the Kuni area, the emperor likely saw Gyōki and his followers, but no evidence can prove that Gyōki welcomed imperial support. More likely, it was the imperial court that needed to use Gyōki's fame and productive capacity.

The Vairocana project and Gyōki's final years

Gyōki's participation in the fund-raising campaign for the Vairocana project has received considerable attention despite the shortage of Nara period texts that document the account. The passage in the *Shoku nihongi* that explains that Emperor Shōmu invited Gyōki to participate in the project is extremely vague and raises many questions. Inoue Kaoru argues

that Gyōki's involvement in the Vairocana project marked a radical departure from his philosophy of noncooperation with the Nara court.[43] Futaba Kenkō doubted, however, that Gyōki's participation was significant enough to affect the campaign. What seems likely is that Gyōki's participation has been exaggerated because of the present interest in the Tōdaiji institution.

One of the reasons why Emperor Shōmu departed from Nara in 740 was to find a suitable location to erect the gilded image of the Vairocana Buddha. Emperor Shōmu was first struck by Vairocana Buddha's majestic appearance in 02/740 when he traveled to a small temple in Kawachi province, called Chishiki temple. Judging from the temple's name, the statue was most likely crafted together by a community of lay believers under the guidance of some monks.[44] Emperor Shōmu was probably impressed by the voluntary nature of the statue's construction. So after the Kuni capital had undergone one year of construction, in 02/742 the emperor ordered a new road opened that would lead to Koga district in Ōmi province. In the remote town of Shigaraki, the emperor announced that he would build a detached palace and a statue of the Vairocana Buddha: "Here on the fifteenth day of the tenth month 743, I am taking the great vow of the bodhisattva and promise to construct a golden statue of Vairocana Buddha" (*Shoku nihongi*: 10/15/743). During the next year or so, Emperor Shōmu made four separate visits to Shigaraki ranging from a few days to two weeks.

In Emperor Shōmu's famous edict of 743, in which he proclaimed his dedication to the Vairocana project, he affirmed his efficacious powers as the chief ritualist and promised to devote himself to the service of others: "Although I possess little virtue, I have solemnly assumed the highest rank. My goal has always been to alleviate the sufferings of all sentient beings, and my mercy has cleansed all the shores, yet the Dharma has still not been heard everywhere" (*Shoku nihongi*: 10/15/743). In Emperor Shōmu's imperial edict, he declares that the Vairocana Buddha image should not be an imperially sponsored project, like the provincial temples: "I am the one who possesses the wealth under heaven. And it is I who wield heaven's authority. It is easy for me to use this wealth and authority to construct this precious statue, but it is difficult to attain the proper spirit." Therefore, the emperor proposed that the project should be a communal undertaking: "Those who belong to the *chishiki* group should honestly bring forth their sincere minds, since this will bring about good fortune to each member. Let the Vairocana Buddha be worshiped three times a day" (*Shoku nihongi*: 10/15/743).

Emperor Shōmu encouraged everybody from courtiers to the local peasants to contribute in some way toward the statue's construction:

"Everybody should actively participate in Vairocana Buddha's construction. If there is anybody who can donate even a blade of grass or a handful of soil in order to help build the statue, welcome their donation." Joan Piggott suggested that economic reasons lay behind the emperor's insistence on collecting donations. The *Ritsuryō* tribute system was insufficient for providing the necessary funds for imperial projects, because the peasants and local officials were still trying to recover from the effects of the recent civil war, pestilence, and the moving of the capital. In 743, the court issued the New Fields Law, which guaranteed peasants the right permanently to own new land that they personally cleared.[45] The state's aim behind this law was most likely to increase the annual surplus by expanding the land under cultivation.[46] The imperial court would not have granted peasants such freedom unless they recognized that the previous tribute system was inadequate.

The construction of the Vairocana Buddha represented the culmination of Emperor Shōmu's efforts to bring the fragmented center and the periphery together under the protection of the cosmic Buddha, known as Vairocana.[47] During almost every crisis, Emperor Shōmu implemented a series of measures that would help to provide the opportunity for monks and lay people throughout the provinces to pray and perform devotions to various Buddhist deities. When the great epidemic of 737 plagued the provinces, Emperor Shōmu ordered the erection of the Shakamuni Buddha triad (*Shaka sanzonzō*) and the copying of the *Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom* (*Dabanruo jing*) in every province. A few years later, when the Hirotsugu rebellion split the country between the Fujiwara allies and the other aristocratic families, Emperor Shōmu retreated from the capital and ordered the construction of provincial temples (*kokubunji*) where monks and nuns could read sutras and perform nation-protecting rites.

Inoue Kaoru points out that Jien's thirteenth-century historical commentary, *An Interpretive Historical Japan* (*Gukanshō)*, attributes the provincial temples to Gyōki and his followers.[48] However, what seems odd is that Gyōki, who spent most of his life constructing road-side shelters and bridges for the local notables and peasants, would suddenly change his stance and participate in such a large-scale imperial project. If Gyōki really had taken part in the construction of provincial temples, the *Shoku nihongi*, *Nihon ryōiki*, or *Daisōjō sharibyōki* would at least have mentioned the temples' names. Besides, later passages in the *Shoku nihongi* indicate that governors were having a difficult time getting these temples built and that the state had to send officials to inspect each of the sites and use a larger portion of the annual tax toward temple construction (*Shoku nihongi*: 07/23/744; 11/07/747). Thus, Gyōki, who died in 749,

likely would not have been able to make a significant contribution toward the provincial temple project.

In 12/743, Emperor Shōmu declared that "it has been four years since the Grand Hall of Nara has been torn down and moved to Kuni. The construction of Kuni has only been partially completed and a great sum of money has been spent. I have decided to stop the construction of the Kuni capital and build a palace here in Shigaraki" (*Shoku nihongi*: 12/26/743). Comprehending Emperor Shōmu's decision to build yet another imperial palace must have been difficult considering that he had already spent a great deal of money on the Kuni capital. However, Takinami Sadako argued that the emperor did not want to be thirty kilometers away while the Vairocana Buddha project was under construction, as the people's donations and resources could end up in the hands of corrupt officials. Another strong possibility is that Emperor Shōmu modeled his statue after the Vairocana Buddha of the Zhou Empress Wu (r. 690–705) in Longmen. After the fashion of the Longmen Buddha of Luoyang, Emperor Shōmu seems to have wanted his statue to be erected outside Kuni, which was still in many ways a capital subsidiary to Nara.[49]

In discussing the Vairocana project, an issue that frequently arises is the extent to which Gyōki and his followers participated in the Vairocana campaign.[50] In a sense Gyōki had worked his entire life in trying to alleviate the heavy burdens that the *Ritsuryō* state had inflicted on the masses. His participation in an imperially sponsored Buddhist project might suggest that Gyōki himself finally agreed to join the official monastic establishment. The *Shoku nihongi* states that "the emperor arrived at the Shigaraki palace and extended the temple precincts in order to erect the Vairocana Buddha statue. Gyōki led his disciples and encouraged the masses to participate [in the Vairocana project]" (*Shoku nihongi*: 10/19/743). Such scholars as Yoshida Yasuo believe that this passage shows that Gyōki obeyed a court order to participate in the Vairocana fund-raising campaign. However, this passage is not written in the form of an imperial edict, so one should not exclude the possibility that Gyōki participated in the Vairocana project on his own accord. Also important to recognize is that the foregoing passage uses the word *kanyū* ("to lead and encourage") instead of *kanjin*, which refers to the act of soliciting donations from the public. *Kanyū* does not necessarily imply collecting donations, so one should not assume that Gyōki acted as an imperial fundraiser for the Vairocana project.

Futaba Kenkō casts further doubt on the subject by pointing out that Gyōki's participation in the Vairocana project is not mentioned in the *Daisōjō sharibyōki*, *Sanbōe kotoba,* or *Gyōki nenpu*. Even Gyōki's

biography in the *Shoku nihongi* leaves out his involvement in the project. This means that Gyōki either did not participate in the Vairocana project at all or that his involvement was so minimal that it was not worth mentioning in his imperial biography.[51]

Kimu Tarusu states that Gyōki's contribution could not have been very significant, because Gyōki continued to build practice halls and road-side rests while he was supposedly encouraging people to participate in the Vairocana project.[52] Gyōki probably served in some minimal capacity, because the *Shoku nihongi* states that he encouraged the masses in Shigaraki to participate. However, Kimu seems to have overemphasized the importance of Gyōki's own construction projects. Even those scholars, such as Inoue Mitsusada, who defend the historical reliability of all the charitable sites attributed to Gyōki, agree that Gyōki could not have continuously worked on practice halls and road-side shelters during his forty-year career. According to the *Gyōki nenpu*, during a five-year period between 740 to 745, no sites are listed as having been constructed by Gyōki. This suggests that Gyōki was involved in something else, perhaps even the Vairocana project, which prevented him from concentrating on his construction projects.

The imperial court must have needed Gyōki's cooperation desperately. As Kawasaki Tsuneyuki stated, the state's ability to mobilize the public had been seriously undermined by the numerous construction projects that they had forced on the people. Therefore, to get people involved in the Vairocana project, the state needed the cooperation of a charismatic figure, such as Gyōki, who was well acquainted with the local notables.[53]

Nakagawa Osamu's assertion that it was not Gyōki who radically changed his stance toward the imperial court in 743 but the state that altered its position toward Gyōki, is convincing because Gyōki possessed the potential to motivate the lay community into participating in the Vairocana project.[54] On 01/21/743, Emperor Shōmu took the unprecedented step of appointing Gyōki to the post of *daisōjō*, which was above the highest-ranking monks in the central monastic office (*Shoku nihongi*: 01/21/743). Whether Gyōki was granted this title for his services in the Vairocana campaign is unclear, but this promotion probably meant very little to him, as no evidence shows that he exercised his authority as the highest-ranking official of the central monastic office. The *Daisōjō sharibyōki* states that Gyōki was awarded one hundred *ko* of land on assuming the post but treated the land as if it was not his own.

While the emperor was busy with the Vairocana project, high-ranking officials became anxious about the timing for choosing a more permanent capital. The *Shoku nihongi* states that on 01/741, Emperor Shōmu gathered one hundred of the highest-ranking officials and announced, "I have

decided to choose between Kuni and Naniwa for the new capital. Let each person state their opinion" (*Shoku nihongi*: 01/01/744). This is the first time that Emperor Shōmu indicated that he was interested in turning the Asuka palace at Naniwa into the new capital. As with Emperor Shōmu's previous declarations to move capitals, the courtiers seem to have been taken by surprise, as the majority voted to stay in Kuni, which had already been the capital for the prevoius three years. The passage states that Emperor Shōmu also sent officials to ask some influential merchants which city they preferred; all except for two merchants agreed that remaining in Kuni was better.

However, just when Emperor Shōmu was about to decide the capital in which to settle, his only son, Prince Asaka, suddenly died of a mysterious illness (*Shoku nihongi*: 01/13/744). Yokota Kenichi suggested that Prince Asaka may have been assassinated by one of the Fujiwara officials who remained in Kuni as palace guards, because Ōtomo Yakamochi's poems in the *Manyōshū* do not indicate that the prince was afflicted with any illness before his death.[55]

The death of Prince Asaka seems to have had a profound effect on Emperor Shōmu, because the emperor ignored the advice of his officials and declared Naniwa as the new imperial capital (*Shoku nihongi*: 02/16/744). The imperial seal was sent to Naniwa, and peasants and officials were urged to move to the new capital. The *Shoku nihongi* states that Tachibana no Moroe and the retired Empress Genshō actually moved to Naniwa, but the majority of the officials seemed to have remained in Kuni and Shigaraki. The emperor himself had only remained in Naniwa for a total of forty days when he chose to declare it as the new capital. Furthermore, Emperor Shōmu was actually in the Shigaraki palace when the imperial decree was issued. Emperor Shōmu's absence from his new capital in Settsu strengthens the argument that the emperor moved from one capital to the next to isolate and weaken the powerful political cliques, such as the Tachibana no Moroe and Fujiwara. As the minister of the left, Tachibana no Moroe still had considerable political influence. But, owing to the death of his nephew, Prince Asaka, and the absence of the emperor in Naniwa, Tachibana no Moroe may have realized how vulnerable his family had become.

After leaving some of the highest-ranking officials behind in his three capitals, Emperor Shōmu returned to Shigaraki to oversee the progress of the Vairocana project. The abundance of timber and various minerals made Shigaraki an ideal location for erecting the Vairocana statue. However, two devastating fires in the western hills caused the emperor to retreat from his palace and, in 05/745, when Emperor Shōmu consulted monks from the four major temples (Yakushi temple, Daian temple,

Gangō temple, and Kōfuku temple), they unanimously agreed that the emperor should reestablish Nara as the imperial capital (*Shoku nihongi*: 05/04/745). Emperor Shōmu ordered his officials residing in the three other capitals to return to Heijō and took what had been completed of the Buddha statue back to Nara. Although Emperor Shōmu's statue in Shigaraki was a failure, he seems to have been able to accomplish an important political objective. By skillfully moving from one capital to the next, the emperor successfully isolated, frustrated, and weakened the power base of the highest-ranking officials who had given him so much trouble during the previous decade.

In conclusion, Emperor Shōmu's erratic movements created chaos, and those forced to participate in the numerous imperial construction projects probably suffered the most, as the *Shoku nihongi* indicates. To determine the extent to which Gyōki was aware of the political implications of Emperor Shōmu's movements is difficult on the basis of Nara texts alone. It is certainly possible that the compilers of the *Gyōki bosatsuden* and *Gyōki nenpu* carefully added several new descriptions about Gyōki's construction projects and outlined both Emperor Shōmu and Gyōki's movements, so that it *appeared* as if Gyōki was building road-side shelters and practice halls for the laborers who participated in the construction of numerous imperial palaces.

Furthermore, during the last few decades, Yoshida Yasuo has argued that Gyōki altered his construction projects to accommodate the demands of the Nara court. However, if any accommodation at all was made, it was the Nara court that recognized that Gyōki's productive capacities could benefit their interests. The imperial edict of 741, which ordered 750 *ubasoku* to assist in the construction of a bridge over the Kizu river, shows that the imperial court recognized the legitimacy of Gyōki's activities. Because the court's ability to mobilize peasants and laborers had been seriously undermined by its numerous construction projects, Gyōki's charisma and ties with local lineage groups were needed for the Vairocana campaign and other imperial projects.

5

GYŌKI'S CHARITABLE PROJECTS

In most full-length studies of Gyōki, his prime achievement is his participation in numerous charitable projects. In the last few decades, interest has grown in investigating the reasons for Gyōki's involvement, but no satisfactory answers have been presented, because the extent of his actual participation cannot be incontrovertibly proven with the present level of archeological evidence. To conclude that Gyōki's construction projects were unlike any other "social welfare" projects in Japanese history is tempting. In the Heian and Kamakura periods, such monks as Kōya (903–972) and Eison (1201–1290) performed similar "charitable works," but they did not cover the range of activities that Gyōki was believed to have undertaken. Constructing bridges, road-side shelters, and orphanages was sometimes viewed as one of the activities that an ascetic monk performed during his period of training. However, Gyōki seems to have continued to direct these large-scale projects for his entire life and, aside from the Vairocana Buddha campaign at the end of his life, organizing various kinds of construction projects seems to have been Gyōki's primary occupation. Very likely, Gyōki did not lead such a large-scale movement without the knowledge of other monks who helped to construct bridges, orphanages, and road-side shelters. To the extent possible, we should determine which particular monks or texts might have inspired him to devote his life to charitable projects.

Yoshida Yasuo and Nakai Shinkō have argued that the "Three Stages" (*Sanjie*) texts and the Mahayanist ideal of the "field of merit" (Chinese *futran*) influenced Gyōki's activities.[1] At the present, not enough documentary evidence exists to make overarching generalizations about the reasons that lay behind Gyōki's participation in numerous construction projects. This has allowed scholars to create numerous new "myths" and "legends" regarding his construction projects. Nevertheless, if we limit our examination to texts from the Nara period, Gyōki's construction projects far more likely will seem to have been a practical response to

the needs of the local people and influential clans who were overburdened by new responsibilities imposed on them by the imperial court. In other words, to see Gyōki's projects as "religious" per se is not necessary.

The question of influences

The earliest accounts of Gyōki tell us very little about the kind of studies Gyōki conducted as a monk. Gyōki's biography in the *Shoku nihongi* states that he studied the consciousness-only doctrine of the Yogācāra school (*Yuga yuishikiron*) and thoroughly understood its teachings (*Shoku nihongi*: 02/749). This text was essential for all Hossō monks who wanted to investigate the nature and phenomenal manifestation of all existence, but they shed little light on why Gyōki chose to devote himself to performing charitable works. Yoshida Yasuo believed that more likely Gyōki's encounter with the teachings of a sixth-century Chinese Buddhist movement known as the *Three Stages school* (Chinese: *Sanjie jiao*; Japanese: *Sangaikyō*) changed his attitude toward "social welfare."[2]

The founder of the Three Stages school, Xinxing (540–594), had read widely in the *Lotus*, *Vimalakīrti*, and *Nirvana* sutras and set up his Three Stages school in Zhenji temple at Chang'an. In his younger years, Xinxing is known to have abandoned the precepts to beg and preach to the masses. After participating in various state labor projects, he settled in Zhenji temple, where he wrote the *Records of the Three Stages* (*Sanjie jilu*) and *Miscellaneous Writings on Practicing Against the Senses* (*Tuigen qixing zalu*). By the time of his death, Xinxing had gathered more than three hundred disciples who actively promoted the teachings of the Three Stages school to the masses.[3]

Yabuki Keiki stated that it seems likely that Gyōki's teacher, Dōshō, read Three Stages texts during his stay in Chang'an and brought them back to Japan in 661. Dōshō's Chinese master, Xuanzang, included a monk of the Three Stages school on his Sanskrit translation committee, so Xuanzang seems to have been tolerant toward the Three Stages teachings.[4] However, within three decades after Dōshō returned to Japan, the Three Stages teachings were attacked by other sects and, in 695, the Tang court condemned it as a heretical sect and closed down all its temples. In 660, when Dōshō was still in Chang'an, the Three Stages school was at the height of its popularity, so Dōshō had no reason to prevent his Japanese disciples from studying the Three Stages texts. Yoshida Yasuo argued that the radical teachings of the Three Stages school had a profound effect on Gyōki, who probably read most of the texts that Dōshō brought back from China.[5]

Tracing the teachings of the Three Stages school is difficult, as its texts and commentaries were banned in China from 695 onward. These

texts had been lost in Japan for centuries until a copy of the *Records of the Three Stages* was identified in 1925 among the archives of the Shōsōin in Nara. According to Yoshida Yasuo, what is striking about these Three Stages texts is that they condemned the teachings of other sects and claimed that only their doctrines could lead everyone to salvation.[6] This exclusivity most likely caused the sect's rapid downfall in the eighth century. However, for Gyōki, who supposedly studied the three divisions of Buddhist scriptures at Asuka temple, what might have seemed refreshing about the Three Stages texts was that they avoided abstract philosophical issues and urged believers to take an active part in begging and charitable projects. Xinxing's *Miscellaneous Writings on Practicing Against the Senses* puts particular emphasis on the moral degeneracy of all sentient beings during the "final age of the *dharma*" (*mofa*). Xinxing openly condemns people who try to rely on their own ascetic strength to accumulate good karma:

> [All sentient beings] should congregate in their local towns and settlements and avoid staying in the mountains and other isolated places. This is because [during the final age] *tathagata* will be among the masses, so those who live in the settlements will benefit from their association with him, and those who remain in the mountains will gain nothing.[7]

In a later passage, Xinxing uses the analogy of a broken cart to explain the moral degeneracy of sentient beings during the final age. He states that this broken cart could be repaired only if the monastic community used rope to tie the broken pieces together. In other words, only cooperation between the monastic community and laypeople could ensure salvation during the degenerate age.

Yoshida Yasuo cited the *Gyōki bosatsuden* (eleventh century) to explain that Gyōki spent much of his time in performing austerities in the mountains.[8] However, as we have seen in Chapter 3, the *Gyōki bosatsuden* was compiled by an unknown author who does not identify his source of information, so it cannot be regarded as a completely reliable text. The *Kiyomigahara* codes, which restricted mountain asceticism, must not have been fully implemented at the turn of the century, as many fully ordained monks who appear in the *Nihon shoki* and the *Shoku nihongi* are not condemned for their ascetic activities. Such Mahayanist texts as the *Commentary on the Great Wisdom Sutra* (*Dazhidulun*) had always questioned the value of mountain asceticism, because it often became a self-gratifying activity. In theory, monks participated in mountain asceticism to acquire magical powers, which

they could use to help the masses. However, such legendary monks as En no Gyōja are believed to have been so wrapped up in these activities that they became a lifetime occupation for them.[9]

Yoshida Yasuo believed that Gyōki's encounter with the Three Stages texts previously mentioned helped him to abandon his ascetic training in the mountains and begin his charitable activities in more urban areas.[10] If Yoshida's argument is correct, it would mean that Gyōki was inspired by texts that opposed some of the fundamental regulations of the *Sōniryō*.[11] However, as we have seen here, many of Yōshida's statements cannot be substantiated. If the Three Stages teachings were profoundly different from the other texts that Dōshō brought back from China, why did not more disciples acknowledge their value? None of the early and medieval histories or hagiography discuss Gyōki's construction projects in terms of the Three Stages texts.

The field of merit

Nakai Shinkō, conversely, argued that Gyōki's charitable activities were inspired by the Mahayana ideal of *futian* (Japanese: *fukuden*). The word *fukuden* literally means "field of merit," and it is a metaphor for a buddha or a bodhisattva who benefits those who worship him just as a field yields crops. It has also been interpreted as any virtuous monk's offerings. As Miyagi Yōichirō points out, the concept of the field of merit appears in pre-Mahayanist texts of the third to second centuries B.C. The *Mahāsaṃghika Laws* (*Mohesengzhilu*) explain that those who dig wells at the side of roads, plant trees and give away their fruits, as well as those who build bridges and provide shade for travelers will earn enough merit to be reborn as a heavenly being (*tennin*). Also, when Mahayana Buddhism became popular in China and Japan, field of merit became an ideal of the bodhisattva.[12]

Each sutra introduced a slightly different version of what constituted a field of merit. The *Commentary on the Great Wisdom Sutra* describes two kinds of fields of merit. The merit that one acquires from revering a buddha or a bodhisattva is called a *field of reverence* (*keiden*), and the merit that is given to the poor and needy is called a *field of compassion* (*hiden*).[13] Although the earliest sutras viewed a holy person as a field of merit, Mahayana texts seemed to have perceived charitable activities to be the most basic kind of field of merit. The *Sutra on the Fields of Merit* (*Shudefutian jing*) specifically lists seven kinds of fields-of-merit activities in which faithful believers should participate. They include (1) erecting pagodas, cloisters, and chapels; (2) constructing gardens and ponds and planting trees; (3) providing medicine for the sick; (4) building boats

and helping the masses to cross to the shore of enlightenment; (5) constructing bridges for the old and weak; (6) widening the roads and digging wells for thirsty travelers; and (7) building latrines and getting rid of the stench. Other sutras, such as the *Brahma-net Sutra* (*Fanwang jing*), list eight fields of merit, but most overlap with the *Sutra on the Fields of Merit.* What is amazing about these lists of fields of merits is that with the exception of building latrines, Gyōki is said to have participated in every single one of them. Miyagi Yōichirō explained that in the *Liao Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Liang gaoseng zhuang*) and *Tang Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Tang gaoseng zhuang*), which were brought over to Japan from China around the eighth century, only one monk (called Wan Tianyi) actively participated in field-of-merit activities. Wan was said to have provided food for the poor, instructed prisoners, dug wells, and treated the sick, but his activities seem to have been carried out on a scale much smaller than that of Gyōki.[14]

The Mahayana bodhisattva ethic taught that performing various austerities for the salvation of the self was necessary, but leading other sentient beings to salvation was even more important. The *Sōniryō* required monks and nuns to remain in their temples and limit contact with outsiders, but this went against the ideal of the field of merit. Gyōki's various construction projects may have violated the laws of the *Sōniryō*, but they actualized the field of merit on a grand scale for the first time in Japan. Unfortunately, however, this explanation does not clarify why the teachings of these sutras might have been important for Japanese monks during the Nara period specifically. After all, the concept of field of merit appears in the earliest sutras, and Indian and Chinese monks must have been familiar with it for centuries. One is more likely to find the possible source of Gyōki's inspiration among monks and nuns who also participated in construction projects during the seventh and eighth century.

Such scholars as Miyagi Yōichirō argue that Gyōki's social welfare projects were carried out on an unprecedented scale.[15] During the Nara period, Gyōki certainly had the largest number of followers who participated in large-scale construction projects. Nevertheless, it does not seem likely that he was the first religious figure in Japan to teach the merit of "charitable works." Nor can Gyōki's exposure to the Three Stages commentaries and the *Sutra on the Fields of Merit* sufficiently explain his lifetime commitment to community service. Gyōki's encounter with Japanese Buddhist monks specializing in various kinds of construction and his knowledge of monks who had devoted themselves to various building projects probably shaped his own activities. Therefore, rather than viewing Gyōki as an unique figure who single-handedly established

precedents for Buddhist community service in Japan, we should regard him as *one of the many* Buddhist monks during the Nara and Heian periods who promoted building ports, bridges, and road-side shelters to alleviate the suffering of local farmers and small clans who were trying to adjust to their new burdens of the *Ritsuryō* system.

One may then wonder why the imperial court lavished so much attention on a single monk on the fringes of the Buddhist monastic establishment. Gyōki initially received criticism from the Nara court in 717, according to the *Shoku nihongi,* because he ignored the newly created regulations for Buddhist monks. Although the imperial edict does not explicitly state why Gyōki had been collecting donations, forming cliques, and instructing lay people, Gyōki was most likely gathering the locals who were willing to construct charitable facilities where they were desperately needed. On the basis of the *Gyōki nenpu*, we can see that Gyōki had began his construction projects only a year before 717, so the court could not have known the scale to which his movement would develop. What the Nara court perceived as a threat were Gyōki's charisma and independent spirit. Thus, they continued to monitor his activities for the next three decades as evident in the *Shoku nihongi*.

Charitable projects before Gyōki

Gyōki's Hossō master, Dōshō, is the first monk in the Six National Histories who is said to have been actively involved in the construction of bridges and ports. Dōshō's biography in the *Shoku nihongi* states that "he traveled far under the heavens digging wells at the edge of roads, building bridges and providing boats for people to cross. The Uji bridge in the province of Yamashiro was built by Dōshō" (*Shoku nihongi*: 700/03). Dōshō had studied under the eminent monk Xuanzang during his stay in China. After bringing back various sutras and relics, Dōshō set up a meditation hall in the eastern corner of Asuka temple and traveled to various provinces. Xuanzang himself went on frequent retreats, but nothing indicates that he explicitly encouraged the construction of bridges and road-side shelters.[16]

Dōshō was one of the most prominent monks of the Asuka court. He introduced Xuanzang's translations of *The Discourse on the Theory of Consciousness-Only* (*Cheng weishilun*) to the Japanese monastic community. Also, in 698, after performing the dedication ceremony to the new Buddha statue in Yakushiji, Dōshō was awarded the rank of senior secondary prelate (*daisōzu*). Three years later, when he passed away, they cremated his body according to his will.[17] However, Dōshō's

biography does not give us a sense that he emphasized "social welfare" projects above other sacred rituals. In fact, Kimu Tarusu doubts that Dōshō built the Uji bridge in Yamashiro province. A stone monument dating back to 646 attributes the building of the Uji bridge to a monk called Dōtō:

> The gushing waters [of the Uji River] are as fast as flying arrows. A wandering traveler stopped his horse and started a town [near the river.] The waters were so deep that men and horses who tried to cross lost their lives. From ancient times until now, nobody knew how to cross this river. Then came a servant of the Buddha by the name of Dōtō who was descended from the Ema clan in Yamashiro. In the second year of the Taika era (646), he built this bridge which allowed people and animals to cross. And by virtue of this deed, he vowed to use this bridge to help [people] cross to the other shore. He hoped that sentient beings would share his wish and realize the cause of their sufferings.[18]

If the date 646 is correct, Dōshō could not possibly have built this bridge. Kimu tended to think that the Nara court wanted to exalt Dōshō by exaggerating the scale of his charitable projects.[19] However, Nakai Shinkō did not rule out the possibility that Dōshō participated in the construction of the Uji bridge. First of all, Dōshō was possibly also called Dōtō, or the person who copied the *Uji Bridge Memorial* (*Ujibashi ishibumi*) could have copied Dōshō's name incorrectly. Even if this were not the case, Dōshō might have reconstructed the bridge that Dōtō built, as bridges did not last more than thirty or forty years.[20] What is most important about the *Uji Bridge Memorial* is that it ties the act of constructing bridges to the Mahayana ideal of helping sentient beings to reach the shore of enlightenment.

An important factor to recognize is that the laborious projects that Dōshō undertook were not historical anomalies. In 693, a monk by the name of Hōkyō was awarded three *chō* of rice fields for building a port.[21] These kinds of projects were most likely completed with the help of lay believers. An entry from the *Shoku nihongi* half a century later states that a Kinki port was built by the local chieftains of the Munakata district under the guidance of a priest called Juō.[22] Scholars of early Japanese Buddhism tend to portray Gyōki as single-handedly managing the construction of ports, bridges, and orphanages, but evidence shows that other monks were undertaking similar projects while Gyōki was alive. In the Hanazono village in Wakayama Prefecture, a copy of the *Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom* (*Dabanruo jing*) survives, dating back to 09/

754. In scroll 421 of this giant collection, the names of the patrons and an account of a monk who started this copying project are described:

> As I quietly recall the past, there was a lofty monk who lived east of the river called Mampuku. He was engaged in numerous activities, so I will limit my discussion to the most important ones. [Under his guidance] carpenters set out to build a bridge over a wide river and Mampuku put forth the vow to attain prajñā in his next life. He began the project in 739 and continued until the winter of 740, but was still not able to complete it.
>
> He finally passed away in a pine grove, so a monk called Kaei took over his task. Kaei made the four vows of the bodhisattva at the treasure bridge and passed on the one vehicle practice (*ichijō no gyō*) of wisdom.[23]
>
> Fortunately, everybody in my Iehara village entrusted their hearts to this master and humbly finished embellishing twenty fascicles of the *Dabanruo jing* in two cases, 43 and 52. I am grateful that we can offer this small good deed and requite with utmost gravity the four obligations (*shion*). I pray that people will be able to trust their friends and the three benefits (*sanyaku*) and sustain their families for one hundred years.[24] And I hope that magnanimous individuals will take the extra [things] they have and share it with everybody. Then we can all travel to the bridge of Awakening.[25]

What is interesting about this passage is that an entire village of lay believers seem to have taken part in Mampuku's project. Once Kaei took over the task, the project evolved into copying sutras and constructing the bridge. As most of the patrons who signed their names were women, Nakai Shinkō claimed that the men of the community concentrated on building the bridge while the women copied sections of the *Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom*.[26]

For an individual monk to repair a temple or build a bridge in more remote regions, he or she needed the cooperation of the local *chishiki*. The word *chishiki* was originally used to signify a Buddhist master who instructed people about morality. Gradually over time, its meaning was expanded to signify a community of lay believers who are led by monks to perform good works for the salvation of the self and all sentient beings. In a former clan temple (*uji dera*) called *Nonaka temple* in Osaka stands an altar for the Maitreya Buddha that still has a legible inscription. It states that in 666, a group of 118 *chishiki* made donations for the golden statue to be built.[27] One should note that because the projects that *chishiki*

communities undertook were not coerced by the imperial court, surely some charismatic monks who had close relations with the local village leaders and the heads of powerful clans would have had to organize these labor-intensive projects.

During the seventh century, donations made for copying sutras and erecting monuments were small-scale projects involving no more than 150 lay believers. As the lay community could not participate in monastic rituals and study, its members tried to earn some merit by giving alms and helping monks in their construction projects. According to Janet Goodwin, "the faithful believer's best chance at buddhahood was to earn enough merit through supporting monks to allow rebirth in his or her next life as a human male inclined to become a monk himself."[28] However, the *Sōniryō* discouraged fully ordained monks from leading groups of lay believers to build bridges, temples, or Buddha images. Article 23 of the *Sōniryō* states, "Monks and nuns who entrust sutras and images of the Buddha to a lay person, or who passes through the gates of the temple to instruct lay people shall receive 100 days of monastic punishment. And the lay person involved shall be tried civil law." Provincial monasteries (*kokubun-ji*) and provincial nunneries (*kokubun-niji*) were supposed to offer lay believers some opportunity to interact with the monastic community. However, faithful lay believers seem to have been dissatisfied with this system, as they actively participated in the construction of "temples for fellow believers" (*chishiki dera*).

Temples of fellow believers seemed to have come into existence out of the laypeople's spontaneous demand for a place of their own to worship. This term is often used interchangeably with the word *uji dera*, which refers to family temples erected by powerful noble families, such as the Soga and Fujiwara. Emperor Shōmu himself made the vow to build the great Vairocana Buddha after visiting a "temple of fellow believers" in Kawachi province in 742.[29] For Gyōki to undertake his charitable projects without the active participation of numerous *chishiki* communities may have been difficult. Gyōki's talent may have been rooted in his ability to recruit and motivate large number of lay believers to spend their time and energy building facilities that would help their communities.

Charitable projects after Gyōki

Considering that thousands of people – many of whom were ordained monks – seem to have participated in Gyōki's projects, that the disciples would continue to direct these projects after their master's death would seem natural. But, Suzuki Keiji argued that most of Gyōki's disciples abandoned their master's projects and joined the official Buddhist

hierarchy.[30] Although possibly Gyōki's fame allowed some of his closest disciples to gain high ranks in the Buddhist institutional hierarchy, insufficient evidence exists to conclude that the disciples completely abandoned Gyōki's charitable activities. Fortunately, the *Tōdaiji yōroku*, *Shōsōin monjo*, and *Honchō kōsōden* list the names of some of Gyōki's disciples, so we can trace their activities.

The *Gyōki nenpu* includes a short anecdote explaining that in 749, when Gyōki passed away at Sugawara temple among his several thousand disciples, Gyōki told Kōshin that he would become an important figure within the monastic community and entrusted to him the supervision of the forty-nine practice halls.[31] The *Fusōryakki* seems to have copied the *Gyōki nenpu* episode that explains that Hōgi was Gyōki's most trusted disciple.[32] However, Nara texts praised Hōgi for a different reason. Apparently after Gyōki's death, Kōshin used healing rituals and medicine frequently, as the *Shoku nihongi* states that he was awarded special titles by the court for caring for the sick and upholding the precepts (*Shoku nihongi*: 03/03/772). Hōgi was also one of Gyōki's disciples who was chosen to be one of the ten masters (*jūshi*) for his medical services. Hōgi seemed to have been associated with Tōdaiji, because the *Tōdaiji yōroku* states that he traveled to Naniwa with his disciples to greet the Chinese precept master, Jianzhen, in 754.[33]

Undoubtedly, these disciples gained unusual opportunities through their association with Gyōki. The disciple Keisei also appears in the memorial that was carved onto Gyōki's gravestone: "The disciple, Keisei, cried out loud and looked toward the sky, but there was no sign [of Gyōki.] All that remained was his scattered bones and some ashes. So the disciples put [the bones] inside a box, paid their respects, climbed to the top of [Mt. Ikoma] and buried the remains." [34] Three years after this burial, Keisei received a personal invitation from Emperor Shōmu to attend the dedication ceremony of the Vairocana Buddha at Tōdaiji and was awarded the fifth imperial rank.[35] Other monks who were awarded the fifth rank along with Keisei were prominent members of the central monastic office renowned for their understanding of Garland Wreath Sutra (*Huayan jing*) and esoteric rituals. As Keisei did not have any of these qualifications, he was probably invited to take Gyōki's place as his master had made a contribution toward the construction of the Vairocana Buddha.[36]

From the foregoing examples, we can see that after Gyōki's death, his disciples no longer worked on the fringes of the Buddhist establishment. They also seem to have lost interest in large-scale projects in which they participated while Gyōki was alive. However, a few Nara texts suggest that some of them at least worked toward preserving the monasteries that Gyōki had built. A report dating back to 11/749 in the *Shōsōin monjo*

archives indicates that eight of Gyōki's disciples inspected the conditions of Kumeta temple in Izumi province that was built by Gyōki in 734.[37] The report lists the amount of land the temple owned and recommends repairs on various parts of the property. Ultimately, Gyōki's disciples seemed to have been left with more practice halls and road-side shelters than they could manage, and the eminent monks of the ninth century took a more active role in charitable projects.

In the early part of the ninth century, after the Tendai and Shingon sects were recognized by the Heian court, their leaders established curricula for their annual ordinands. Saichō (767–822) set up a twelve-year study program for his disciples on Mt. Hiei. On completing this training, each disciple was evaluated, and those suited for directing community projects were assigned to become lecturers and readers in the provinces. Saichō required these lecturers to take part in constructing bridges and dikes, digging wells and ponds, and planting trees throughout their provinces.[38] Futaba Kenkō argued that Saichō had Gyōki in mind when assigning these duties to his disciples, because Saichō cites Gyōki's forty-nine practice halls as an example of Mahayana devotion to all sentient beings.[39]

Saichō himself took part in constructing road-side shelters in the later years of his life. In 815, when Saichō traveled between Mino and Shinano, he discovered that the roads were treacherous, so he constructed two road-side shelters, which he called *kōsai-in*.[40] When Gyōki was active, many of the road-side shelters and inns were built with the support of the local clans but, during the ninth century, these facilities were sponsored by governors and local magistrates. A Heian collection of royal decrees and council of state directives, called *A Collection of Three Sets of Regulations* (*Ruijū sandai kyaku*), states that the council of state ordered the construction of road-side shelters (*fuseya*) and provided several boats for those who were unable to cross the Sunomata river in Minō province.[41] The state seemed to have been interested in this project primarily because the treacherous currents of the river prevented the local farmers from submitting their taxes to their provincial headquarters. The council of state assigned a monk, called Chūichi, of Daian temple to make sure that these projects were completed as requested. Once the *fuseya* were finished, the governor and the lecturers were supposed to take turns in keeping an eye on these facilities.

Nakai Shinkō pointed out that the nineteenth volume of the *Shūchū shō* explains that by the year 804, six of the nine *fuseya* that Gyōki built had fallen apart.[42] This proves that these facilities could simply not be maintained without the support of the local officials. However, this does not mean that *fuseya* were no longer seen as Buddhist sheltering places

for the poor. In 833, a road-side shelter called "field of compassion inn" (*hiden-sho*) was constructed in Musashi province for sick and weary travelers.[43] As noted earlier, *hiden* refers to fields of merit that are given to the poor out of compassion. So the governor of Musashi province obviously hoped that his project would be associated with the Mahayanist ideal. Similarly, in 835, the governor of Sagami province used his financial resources to build a rest house for the poor.[44] What is interesting about these facilities is that although they were sponsored by provincial governors, Buddhist priests seem actually to have managed them.[45]

To determine the actual capacity in which these monks actually participated in the construction projects is quite difficult. During the eighth century, some medieval hagiographic texts state that Gyōki is believed to have traveled from one village to the next cultivating good relations with the local clans and choosing sites where practice halls and bridges were needed. However, ninth-century records, such as the *Ruijū sandai kyaku* and the *Shoku nihonkōki*, state only that monks belonging to nearby temples helped to manage the various practice halls and road-side shelters after they were completed.

Nakai Shinkō argued that during the early Heian period, Buddhist monks mainly performed esoteric rituals (*shūhō*) while the construction took place. The *Biography of Kōbō Daishi* (*Kōbō daishiden*), for example, states that Kūkai set up platforms and offered prayers while an irrigation project was being completed.[46] Also, a stone memorial from the Mano pond in Sanuki province states that between 852 and 853, a monk from Tōdai temple performed esoteric rituals to ensure the safety of the workers.[47]

Thus, Gyōki was extraordinary in that for most of his life, he did not rely on state support for constructing bridges, road-side shelters, and orphanages. At the beginning of the eighth century, the *Ritsuryō* tribute system was insufficient for providing the necessary funds for the imperial projects. Although the imperial court had enough strength to force the local peasants to drag their regional produce to the capital, the peasants openly began to resist their new responsibilities in the 720s, because the officials were letting them starve at the side of the road once they had fulfilled their tax and labor duties. After the great epidemic of 737 and the Hirotsugu rebellion, the emperor could hardly expect the public to devote their extra energy to imperial projects without some kind of reward. Gyōki, on the other hand, could channel the peasants' dissatisfaction by organizing projects that served the communal needs of the local clans. No evidence suggests that Gyōki's projects in the 730s and 740s conflicted with the state's interests. After all, the bridges and irrigation canals that are associated with Gyōki in the *Gyōki nenpu* probably served people's

agricultural needs and may have even helped peasants to deliver their produce to the capital and the provincial headquarters. However, after Gyōki's death, the state seemed to have taken over the facilities that he had built. Some of the road-side shelters were managed by governors with the help of the local priests, but most of the facilities seem simply to have fallen apart.

Admittedly, because of the dearth of reliable sources from the Nara period, to set forth evidence that would explain Gyōki's involvement in all the charitable projects is extremely difficult. As we have seen, neither the *Sutra on the Fields of Merit* nor the Three Stages texts can sufficiently explain Gyōki's dedication to building road-side shelters, bridges, and practice halls. More likely, many Buddhist monks seem to have been involved in charitable projects because the Nara court continued to enforce unreasonable tax and corveé labor laws despite the miserable condition of the country. Gyōki was active during a period in which monks received the cooperation of *chishiki* communities to build facilities that would allow peasants to carry their tribute to the capital. The fragmentary documents that we have examined suggest that Gyōki may have been inspired by such monks as Mampuku and Kaei, who were already building relief facilities during the first half of the eighth century.

6

GYŌKI AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN BUDDHIST HAGIOGRAPHY

The general trend among scholars of early Japanese Buddhism of the last few decades has been to regard the medieval accounts of Gyōki (excluding the *Gyōki bosatsuden* and the *Gyōki nenpu*) as fantastic legends that were based on popular beliefs. Although Fukuda Takashi and Yoneyama Takako aptly pointed out that new religious beliefs transformed Gyōki's biographies, to assume that the earliest Heian biographies recorded only what the imperial sources had confirmed would be a mistake. The *Nihon ryōiki*, for example, shows the existence already of numerous legends about Gyōki circulating within a few decades after his death.

What should be recognized is that the earliest hagiographic texts that narrate the life of Gyōki portray him as a poet, a shamanic figure, a tireless construction worker, and even a scholarly monk. The hagiographers of the Kamakura period chose which aspects of his personality to emphasize and which characteristics to downplay. In this chapter, we investigate why these hagiographers chose Gyōki to represent values and ideas that did not exist during his own lifetime and how his popular image was altered over the centuries. The accounts are examined in chronological order, so that one can assess how the earliest narratives affected the construction of Gyōki's image in the medieval period.

Gyōki's ancestry

During the earlier chapters, we have not discussed in detail the circumstances surrounding Gyōki's birth, because these accounts are mixed with numerous fantastic elements. In the last two decades, such scholars as Yoshida Yasuo have focused on Gyōki's Korean ancestry. We begin by considering how Gyōki's Korean heritage could inform us about the Korean kinship groups in Japan during the seventh century. The year in which Gyōki was born—668—coincides with the fall of the Koguryō dynasty in Korea. During the seventh century, the Korean peninsula was

divided into three kingdoms, each of which was trying to resist the expansion of the Sui and Tang empires. As the Tang forces advanced into the northernmost kingdom of Koguryō, each of the Korean kingdoms sent envoys to the Yamato court to try to gain military support. In 663, the Yamato court sent a large naval force to aid the southern kingdom of Paekche, which was being attacked by the Tang-Silla alliance, but the Japanese lost four hundred ships at the Battle of Paekchon and withdrew from the Korean peninsula.[1] After the defeat of the two Korean kingdoms, a huge wave of Korean immigrants, including experts in law, medicine, and architecture, arrived in Japan. Seki Akira points out that these high-ranking refugees were invited to the Yamato court to help to compile the *Ritsuryō* codes and erect temples and imperial palaces.[2]

The *Daisōjō sharibyōki* states that both Gyōki's mother and father belonged to Korean immigrant families. On his father's side, Koshi saichi had served as a low-ranking official at the Yamato court. The *Daisōjō sharibyōki* also states that the Koshi family was descended from the legendary figure Wani, who is said to have transmitted ten volumes of Confucius' *Analects*.[3]

The *Daisōjō sharibyōki* explains that Gyōki was born on his mother's estate in Ōtori district, Kawachi province.[4] At the time, the custom was for both the wife and husband to live in the households of their birth. The husband would make periodic conjugal visits to the wife's parents' household. In most cases, the children were raised in the wife's parents' household, so not surprisingly, Gyōki is said to have spent his early years with the Hachita family. The Hachita clan was also a low-ranking immigrant family from Paekche. Gyōki's grandfather, who is mentioned in the *Daisōjō sharibyōki* funerary inscription, was a *kusushi* or a local physician. It was not uncommon for immigrant families from the three Korean kingdoms to live next to each other in certain districts even after settling in Yamato. Not only were there districts during the Asuka-Nara periods called *kudaragun* and *kudarakyō* but until 1940, fifteen percent of the residents who lived along the Paekche River (*kudaragawa*) were Korean.[5]

Why did the compiler of the *Daisōjō sharibyōki* choose to emphasize Gyōki's Korean background? One should not assume that Gyōki's ties to the Korean peninsula were strong. After all, Gyōki's ancestors had immigrated from Paekche more than one hundred years prior to his birth, and his father's family had served as minor officials in the Yamato court for several decades. What is important is that few of the medieval accounts mention his Korean ancestry.

Aside from the *Daisōjō sharibyōki* and the official court accounts discussed in the *Shoku nihongi*, virtually no accounts were written about

Gyōki until the second half of the tenth century, so to evaluate how the Buddhist monastic community perceived him a few decades after his death is difficult. With the compilation of hagiographic texts, such as the *Ōjō gokurakuki* and the *Sanbōe kotoba*, during the tenth and eleventh centuries, interest grew in using Gyōki's accounts for a new type of religious literature, called *ōjōden*, which focused on monks who achieved birth into the Pure Land.

One common feature among these late Heian and Kamakura hagiography is that all describe Gyōki's peculiar birth. As Yoneyama Takako points out, regardless of the civilization or the historical period, numerous legends have always spoken about the miraculous events surrounding the birth of famous leaders and holy men. Shakyamuni Buddha himself was said to have been born from Maya's right armpit, and the Chinese philosopher, Laozi, was thought to have stayed in his mother's womb for eighty years before his birth.[6] In the case of Japan, the *Ōjō gokurakuki* states that Prince Shōtoku's mother witnessed a golden monk in her dream before she gave birth. Gyōki was the second person to appear in the collection:

> When the Bodhisattva Gyōki came out of his mother's womb, he was still wrapped in his mother's placenta. Both his mother and father considered this inauspicious, so they left him under a tree at the fork of the road. After a night when his parents returned to the spot, the child had disentangled itself from the placenta and spoke so eloquently that they decided to raise him.

This account of Gyōki's birth was most likely added by the compiler of the *Ōjō gokurakuki*, as none of the earlier texts mention such an incident. The description employs a well-known mode of highlighting a holy person by citing miracles at his birth. A pattern also seems to appear in various myths and legends: abandoning in a forest or a similarly remote place a newborn infant who is to become a great spiritual leader.[7] This infant is initially deformed or at least considered loathsome, but he or she achieves transformation in the woods and reenters human society endowed with extraordinary powers.[8]

A much better example of these archetypal elements can be found in tale III-19 of the *Nihon ryōiki*. A woman from Yatsushiro village gives birth to an unnatural lump of human flesh that is shaped like an egg. The couple considers this to be a bad omen, so they put their offspring in a bucket and abandon it in the mountains. Seven days later, the egg transforms itself into a little girl who is already able to speak. This child eventually becomes a nun who thoroughly understands the

Lotus Sutra and outdoes high-ranking monks of Daian temple in doctrinal debate.

The fork of the road has often been regarded as a sacred entrance between this world and the next. Ishigami Kataji explains that to this very day, people of the Kinki area make offerings of sweet sake under trees at the forks of roads for various reasons, ranging from safe child delivery to the rebirth of their ancestors.[9] Furthermore, Yoneyama Takako explains that some of the mountain villages even have a custom of wrapping a newly born infant in a leaf and laying it within the branches of a large tree.[10]

The account of Gyōki's life, which was included in the *Ōjō gokurakuki,* seems to have been one of the most widely read accounts of Gyōki. Texts written a few decades later, such as *A Short Record of Japan* (*Fusōryakki*, twelfth century) and the *Miraculous Tales of the Lotus Sutra from Ancient Japan* (*Honcho hokkegenki*, 1044), not only include all the anecdotes mentioned in the *Ōjō gokurakuki* but use its exact wording in many of the passages. Three more texts—*The Biography of the Great Bodhisattva Gyōki* (*Gyōki daibosatsu gyōjōki*, fourteenth century); *Sand and Pebbles* (*Shasekishū*, 1283–1308); and the *Illustrated Text on the Bodhisattva Gyōki* (*Gyōki bosatsu engizu ekotoba*, 1316)—all written in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, take the miraculous-birth motif and develop it into more complex narratives (see Chart 0.1, p. 9). The very beginning of tale V-11 in the *Shasekishū* closely resembles Gyōki's biography in the *Ōjō gokurakuki*:

> The bodhisattva Gyōki was born in Izumi province. His mother, Yakushi, was a lowly servant woman. When Gyōki was born, he looked like a clump of seaweed. His parents were so horrified that they put him into a bowl and abandoned him in the branches of a nettle tree. A begging monk who passed by heard the voice of someone reciting the *daibutsuchō*.[11] When he went to investigate, he found a strange sight. Thinking this "seaweed" might become something useful in the future, the monk instructed it and a few days later, it transformed into a beautiful child.

Contrary to what the earliest hagiographic texts state, *Sand and Pebbles* (*Shasekishū*) explains that Gyōki was born in Izumi province, as Ōtori district was no longer part of the Kawachi province by the fourteenth century.[12] This account is clearly inspired by the *Ōjō gokurakuki* episode about Gyōki's parents rejecting their newly born child. However, it also adds a description of Gyōki reciting spells in the tree and the begging monk helping Gyōki free himself from his unnatural form. In addition,

the compiler of the *Shasekishū* added a new twist to the account by reducing the social status of Gyōki's mother. As we have seen earlier, the oldest account of Gyōki's gravestone memorial used Gyōki's Korean lineage to glorify his background, but Mujū seems to have been more interested in portraying Gyōki as a bodhisattva figure with humble origins who was determined to save the suffering masses.

The fragmented accounts of the *Nihon ryōiki*

Numerous legends about Gyōki seem to have circulated within a few decades after his death. It would be a mistake to assume that the earliest accounts of Gyōki are more historical and that later hagiography is mostly based on fantastic legends. The evolution from historically reliable accounts to fantastic legends is not an inevitable process.

Admittedly, the *Shoku nihongi* contains biographical information about Gyōki that would have been difficult to obtain without witnessing Gyōki's charitable activities at first hand. However, possibly because the compilers were so close to the actual event, they were unable to disentangle themselves from certain political biases and ignored some important events. The earliest accounts of Gyōki, such as the *Daisōjō sharibyōki* and the *Shoku nihongi*, simply state that there *were* forty-nine sites that Gyōki worked on, but they do not bother to explain where they were or how they were constructed. Conversely, when Izumi Kochi set out to compile the *Gyōki nenpu* in the twelfth century, he claims to have gathered specific information about the practice halls, road-side shelters, and bridges that Gyōki built. According to the *Jōgūtaishi shūiki*, Izumi Kochi became interested in Gyōki's construction sites, because he was disillusioned by their lack of maintenance and wanted to learn why they were originally constructed.[13] The chronological list of Gyōki's projects certainly offered more concrete information about Gyōki's activities as compared to earlier hagiography.

What is important to keep in mind is that both the *Shoku nihongi* and the *Nihon ryōiki* were circulating during the beginning of the Heian period, which means that monks and courtiers were exposed to two very different accounts of Gyōki's life. Yoneyama Takako argued that the *Shoku nihongi* and the *Daisōjō sharibyōki* represent the official account of Gyōki's life, whereas the *Nihon ryōiki* depicts the folk conception of Gyōki. Although the *Nihon ryōiki* contains many fantastic accounts about Gyōki, simply to depend on the official-unofficial and aristocratic-folk divisions is a mistake, because Kyōkai, the compiler of the *Nihon ryōiki*, was both a member of the official monastic establishment and at the same time interested in folk customs and beliefs.

The *Nihon ryōiki* contains 116 stories, most of which demonstrate the law of karmic causality. The tales are arranged in chronological order and cover events from Emperor Yūryaku (fifth century) to the reign of Saga (r. 809–823). Numerous books and commentaries have been written on the *Nihon ryōiki*, but actually very little is known about Kyōkai outside of what the text itself tells us. In tale III-38, Kyōkai himself appears as one of the characters. The narrator states that he himself had been leading a life as an impoverished married lay monk, barely able to get by. However, thanks to a mysterious dream in which an old beggar monk encouraged him to set higher standards for himself, Kyōkai was able to reform his ways. The narrator then explained how he entered the official monastic establishment and earned a monastic title in 12/796.

Tada Isshin claims that Gyōki was treated as one of the leading Buddhist authorities by Kyōkai.[14] For one thing, Gyōki appears in more tales than any other monk or emperor.[15] Tada also argued that Gyōki was particularly appealing to Kyōkai, because he represented the ideal of a *shidosō* who worked outside the official monastic establishment.

Although I agree that many monks who appear in the *Nihon ryōiki* are portrayed as wandering ascetics who do not seem to belong to any temple, Gyōki is never directly associated with *shidosō*. Tale II-7, which contains the most biographical information about Gyōki, explicitly states that he was a *shami* who had close ties with Emperor Shōmu. Kyōkai suggests that Gyōki had not taken the final vows that were necessary for being recognized as a full-fledged monk. The only text that describes Gyōki as a fully ordained monk is the *Gyōki bosatsuden* (eleventh century), but this text has many inconsistencies.

In his analysis of the *Nihon ryōiki*, William LaFleur stated that Gyōki was "as much a shaman as a Buddhist and a preacher among the masses rather than a monastic and scholar."[16] Rather than enumerating Gyōki's numerous charitable projects, Kyōkai focuses on his role as a wandering holy man who warns peasants about various spiritual shortcomings. In tale II-7, Kyōkai states that Gyōki could read the minds of other people because he possessed superhuman power, called *jinzūriki*. The *Dictionary of Japanese Buddhist Terms* (*Nihon bukkyōgo jiten*) defines *jinzūriki* as "special wisdom" and more specifically explains that it is a superhuman power acquired by buddhas and bodhisattvas through ascetic training. The *Commentary on the Great Wisdom Sutra* (*Dazhidulun*) and the *Treasury of Analyses of the Law* (*Jushelun*) list six *jinzūriki*. They include the ability to transport oneself to other places instantaneously (*shinsokutsū*); the ability to see hidden things and foresee the future (*tengantsū*); the ability to hear things in far-away places (*tenjitsū*); the ability to read

other people's thoughts (*tashintsū*); the ability to perceive people's previous lives (*shukumeitsū*); and the ability to avoid delusive thoughts (*ruijintsū*). In the *Nihon ryōiki*, Gyōki displays at least three of these six superhuman abilities.[17]

In tale II-30, Gyōki displays his ability to perceive people's past lives. A woman who had come to hear Gyōki give a sermon at a port in Naniwa brought her ten-year-old child with her. The child, who was still unable to walk by himself, sat on his mother's lap noisily eating so that people could not hear the sermon. Seeing the situation was getting out of hand, Gyōki told the mother to throw her child into the river. The woman refused to take Gyōki's advice and reappeared with her noisy child the next day at the sermon, so Gyōki once again told her to throw her child into the river. After thinking it over carefully, the women took Gyōki's advice and then returned to the sermon. Later on, Gyōki explained that the child was a reincarnation of a creditor from her former life. Because she had failed to pay off her debts in her previous life, the creditor was trying to get even with her in this life by eating all her provisions.

This tale addresses the issue of how to deal with handicapped children in a time when a person's productive capacity was key to the survival of the family. The *Kojiki* (712) relates the story of Izanami and Izanagi throwing their lame child into the river, and the *Ōjō gokurakuki* mentions Gyōki's abandonment after birth. Tale II-31, which appears right after the story about Gyōki and the noisy child, discusses the fate of a girl who was born with a left hand that could not be opened. When the parents saw their child's deformity, they felt ashamed, as it was an indication that they had accumulated bad karma in their previous lives. The narrator states that the parents compassionately chose not to abandon their child and raised her with great care. The term *compassionately* was used in this passage, because getting rid of children with deformities was probably the rule rather than the exception.

Gyōki's insistence on throwing the noisy child into the river may not have been regarded as a merciless gesture. Because Gyōki had the ability to perceive the woman's past life, he was able to advise the mother to get rid of the child, who was a malevolent reincarnation. However, in the case of tale II-31, the parents' decision to keep their child brought them good fortune, because their daughter turned out to have been hiding buddha relics in the palm of her hand. Although the daughter died after giving them the precious relics, her parents were able to fulfill their long-cherished desire of erecting a seven-story pagoda.

Tales II-30 and II-31 incorporate many fantastic elements but, in both cases, the narrator provides information about approximate setting and the

characters' residence. The twelfth-century *Gyōki nenpu* also states that Gyōki and his followers built a port in Naniwa in 745. One should not assume that the setting of tale II-30 is completely fictional. The woman with the noisy child is said to have come from the Wakae district in Kawachi province, which is where the Neya and Nagase rivers intersect today. As the distance between the Naniwa and Wakae districts is not so great, possibly the woman traveled to Naniwa to hear Gyōki give a sermon to the people who were helping him to build the Naniwa port and practice hall.

Maruyama Akinori argues that Kyōkai probably used the popular Chinese motif of the vengeful creditor in composing tale II-30. He cites the entry for "creditor ghost" (*tōsaiki*) in the sixth volume of a rather dated dictionary, called the *Dictionary of Chinese Folklore* (*Shinaminzoku jiten*), to explain that when a creditor dies without receiving his repayment in full, he is often reborn as the son or daughter of the debtor and drains the wealth of his parents until he is satisfied. This description closely resembles the content of tale II-31, and Maruyama cites examples from the Song dynasty *Yixianzhi* and Qing dynasty *Liaozhai zhiyi* in which a son, who is a reincarnation of the creditor, squanders all his parents' money.[18] However, until this type of tale is found in early Tang collections that were circulating in Japan during the early Heian period, Maruyama's argument will remain speculative.

As Yoneyama Takako pointed out, there is something uncanny about the description of the child in tale II-30 who was thrown into the river: "The child floated up to the surface of the water and used his hands and feet to stay afloat. Then he opened his eyes widely and complained, 'How regrettable! I have only been able to eat three years' worth of food that you owe me'." Izumoji Osamu points out that this description closely resembles Izanagi's and Izanami's abandonment of their child, Hiruko, as contained in the *Kojiki*. Yoneyama Takako argues that the child is portrayed as an evil river deity (*kappa*) that frequently appears in Japanese folk literature.[19] The earliest record that associates the Naniwa region with river deities comes from the *Nihon shoki*. In the first month of the eleventh year in Emperor Nintoku's reign, a person was thrown into a river in the Ibarata district to sooth the anger of the local river deity.[20] That there were numerous similar legends circulating by the time Gyōki built bridges and dikes in the Naniwa region to prevent the Yodo river from flooding is certainly possible.

Kyōkai may have taken some of the tales about angry river deities and turned Gyōki into a shamanic figure who recognized the danger of allowing such deities to live among the human community. One could argue that because this Shinto deity was preventing the local people from hearing the

Dharma, Gyōki had to force it to return to its realm. Thus, this tale can be interpreted as having an element that includes an underlying agenda of showing Buddhism's superiority over the local deities.

In two other tales, Gyōki displays his extraordinary bodhisattva powers. Tale II-29 describes how many monks and lay people gathered to witness Gyōki perform a Buddhist prayer service outside of Gangō temple. While the service was in progress, Gyōki spotted a woman out of the crowd and said, "That woman has blood smeared on her head. What a terrible smell! Take her away!" On hearing these words, the woman became embarrassed and left the assembly. Although the narrator does not explicitly state what kind of special ability Gyōki used to determine that the woman had been using grease from a wild boar to oil her hair, several commentators, including Izumoji Osamu, have suggested that Gyōki's ability to see the hidden forms of things (*tengantsū*) helped him to learn about the woman's violation.

In tale II-7, Gyōki encountered a renowned monk called Chikō, who bitterly complained that Gyōki was unworthy of Emperor Shōmu's favor. For these arrogant words, Chikō ended up suffering numerous tortures in hell after death. Luckily, however, the hell warden released him and, because his body had not been cremated, he was able to return to his former body. Chikō then set out to find Gyōki to apologize for his offense. The text explicitly states that when Gyōki saw Chikō approaching from the distance, he immediately knew what he was going to say because of his superhuman powers.[21]

From the examples mentioned here, clearly the *Nihon ryōiki*'s agenda was not limited to demonstrating the law of karmic causality. Gyōki appears in tales that focus on taking monastic vows, the tortures of hell, and the miraculous powers of the holy man.[22] In other words, Kyōkai was more interested in portraying Gyōki as a mysterious ascetic who preached to commoners than in describing his numerous charitable projects and his ambiguous relation to the imperial court. Nakagawa Osamu points out that at various points in the seven tales of the *Nihon ryōiki*, Gyōki is called a "virtuous master" (*daitoku*), an "incarnation" (*keshin*), and a "hidden saint" (*inshin no hijiri*).[23] The latter two titles suggest that Gyōki concealed his virtue or true identity to work with people of various social classes.

The proliferation of hagiography

From the later half of the Heian period, interest increased in using Gyōki's accounts to uphold some of the new sectarian teachings. The medieval

monks who wrote about Gyōki were not just interested in recording short tales about a mysterious holy man who performed miraculous deeds. The dozen or so hagiographic texts that were written between the late Heian and the early Kamakura period tried to trace Gyōki's lineage to the Chinese imperial family rather than to the Korean court.

The *Ōjō gokurakuki* (985–987), *Sanbōe kotoba* (984), and *Dainihon Hokkegenki* (1044) were the first works that focused on separate periods in Gyōki's life. In the *Ōjō gokurakuki* and the *Hokkegenki*, Gyōki's life is included as part of the *ōjōden* tradition. *Ōjōden* are collections of hagiographic accounts of monks and holy persons who are thought to have achieved birth into the Amida Buddha's Pure Land. These works usually omitted extraneous details and focused on the signs that prove that the person had actually achieved *ōjō*. For the monks and lay believers of the Heian and Kamakura period, *ōjōden* were more than a set of amusing biographies: They showed the accessibility of the goal of *ōjō* and served as evidence that people in the not-so-distant past had been able to escape the endless cycle of rebirth. Many also believed that by reading or listening to an *ōjōden*, one could gain merit and establish a *kechien*[24] with those whose lives were recorded.[25]

The *Ōjō gokurakuki* records a variety of ways in which people achieved *ōjō*. For some, it was the culmination of one's lifetime achievements, whereas for others it came at the final moments of a person's life. Gyōki's accounts actually make no mention of *ōjō*. In the final section, the narrator describes Gyōki's encounter with an eminent monk who had arrived from India. Also, after stating the date of Gyōki's death, Yoshishige no Yasutane explains that he had not originally intended to include Gyōki in his draft of the *Ōjō gokurakuki*. But, after a strange dream, he felt compelled to include Gyōki's biography. Fredric Kotas explained:

> The transformation of eminent Buddhists of the past such as Gyōgi, Saichō or Ganjin into *ōjōnin* was not an act of conscious fabrication; rather, the fervor of the compilers' faith naturally led them to assume these people attained *ōjō*. Even if the compiler himself evinced some doubt about the absolute certainty of the *ōjō*, as Tameyasu sometimes did, he invariably decided that it is far better to err on the positive side than to risk the possibility of deleting someone who did in fact achieve *ōjō*.[26]

For Yoshishige no Yasutane, Gyōki's charisma and fame were probably more important than whether sufficient proof established that he actually achieved *ōjō*.

Many of the anecdotes that Yoshishige no Yasutane mentions in Gyōki's

accounts can be found in the *Sanbōe kotoba*. This work, which was completed two years earlier than the *Ōjō gokurakuki* in 984, was written to instruct the young Princess Takako on the basic teachings of Buddhism. The author, Minamoto no Tamenori, was a member of the Heian aristocracy and was renowned for his scholarship in the classics. Although Tamenori himself never became fully ordained, he was a devout believer and participated in the biannual "learning-encouragement meetings" (*kangakue*) on Mt. Hiei. In these meetings, where Tendai priests and students of the academy of literature listened to lectures on the *Lotus Sutra*, Tamenori became acquainted with Yoshishige no Yasutane. The two most likely exchanged notes and information about Gyōki, because many of the passages in the *Ōjō gokurakuki* are identical to those of the *Sanbōe kotoba*.[27]

One striking feature of both these works is that they leave out Gyōki's involvement in the building of the grand Vairocana Buddha. The *Ōjō gokurakuki* does state that Emperor Shōmu appointed Gyōki to the post of *daisōjō*, the highest-ranking position in the central monastic office. Yoshishige no Yasutane also explains that when Tōdai temple was completed, Gyōki refused the emperor's offer to make him the chief lecturer (*kōshi*) at the temple. To depict him as a holy man who tried to stay out of the power struggle of the central monastic office probably made more sense.[28]

Another curious episode that appears in the *Ōjō gokurakuki* is Gyōki's supposed encounter with the Indian monk Bodhisena. In Yoshishige no Yasutane's account, Gyōki informs the emperor that an eminent foreign monk is arriving at the port of Naniwa and requests the emperor's permission to greet him. The emperor orders one hundred monks and officials from the ministries of civil music and alien affairs to accompany Gyōki to Naniwa:

> [Gyōki and the one hundred monks] took holy water, incense and flowers and sent them floating off into the bay. The incense and the flowers floated west of their own accord without falling into the water and eventually reached a small boat. An Indian monk was aboard and when he reached the shore, Gyōki took his hand and they offered each other a friendly smile. Then Gyōki sang a Japanese poem,
>
> The vows that were made at Mt. Ryōjusen[29]
> In front of the Shakamuni Buddha
> Have not been violated and continue to manifest themselves
> As the Principle of True Thusness (*shinnyo*)

Then the holy man replied with a poem,

> We meet again Mañjuśrī
> Since we made our vows together at Kopilavastu.[30]

The earliest record that mentions the arrival of Bodhisena in Naniwa can be found in a memorial called the *Memorial of the Brahman from Southern India* (*Nantenjiku baramon sōjōhi*), which was composed by his disciple, Shūei, in 770. According to the memorial, Bodhisena traveled to Japan because he was cordially invited by the Japanese ambassador to China, Tajihi no Hironari, and by the monk, Rikyō, who had been staying in Chang'an and Luoyang since 735.[31] If the date mentioned in the memorial is historically accurate, Gyōki would have been sixty years old, and Bodhisena would still have been a young man in his thirties.[32] Contrary to what is stated in the *Ōjō gokurakuki*, it is highly unlikely that Gyōki would have been ordered by the emperor in 736 to welcome Bodhisena, as the Nara history, *Shoku nihongi*, suggests that he was still at odds with the imperial court. Yoshishige no Yasutane must have based his information on a later source, such as the *Accounts of Bodhisena of Daian Temple* (*Daianji bodai denraiki*, 1118), which paid little attention to the date and place of the two monks' encounter.

The *Daianji bodai denraiki* states that Bodhisena initially traveled to China, because he had heard that he could meet the incarnation of Mañjuśrī at a temple on Mt. Wutai. However, when he arrived at Mt. Wutai, he was told that the incarnation was in Japan, so he eventually headed for Japan.[33] Meanwhile, Gyōki learned that an eminent monk was arriving in Naniwa and gathered one hundred monks to greet him. When the two monks met, Bodhisena first offered Gyōki the poem in which he acknowledged Gyōki to be the bodhisattva he had been seeking. The earliest surviving text that mentions that Gyōki was an incarnation of Mañjuśrī is the *Nihon ryōiki* (Tale I-5). By the beginning of the Heian period, some of the hagiographic accounts of Gyōki included short anecdotes demonstrating how Gyōki revealed himself as Mañjuśrī. However, because none of these anecdotes are included in the *Baramon sōjōhi*, its compiler was probably more interested in describing Bodhisena's contributions toward the Tōdai temple establishment than in glorifying Gyōki. Three years after Gyōki's death in 752, Bodhisena was chosen to paint in the eyes of the Vairocana statue at the dedication ceremony and continued to serve as the primary prelate (*sōjō*) for another decade.

The chronological structure of the *Ōjō gokurakuki* seems to have been a model for later hagiography. The *Hokke genki* and *Fusōryakki* were less concerned with the fragmentary accounts of the *Nihon ryōiki*, which

highlighted Gyōki's shamanistic aspects. Later compilers who wrote about Gyōki seem to have been more interested in sectarian and sociopolitical issues.

The longest biography

The *Gyōkibosatsu engizu ekotoba* is unique among the medieval accounts in that it goes eight hundred years back in time to trace Gyōki's ancestry. This text had been lost in 1567, when Ebaraji (Gyōki's birthplace) burned down, but fortunately a Japanese historian by the name of Horiike Shunpei discovered a surviving copy in the Mt. Kōya archives.[34] This unusual account was initially written in Kanbun by Gyōkaku, the head priest of Ebara temple in 1316.

Gyōkaku apparently ordered a painter to make three hanging scrolls to illustrate the various legends about Gyōki.[35] The first scroll illustrates how Gyōki's supposed Chinese ancestor, Liubang, later the Han Gaozu (256–195 BC), crushed the Qin army and helped to establish the Han dynasty (202 BC–220 AD). The second scroll delineates Gyōki's birth and the beginning of his construction projects, and the third scroll depicts the events in the later years of Gyōki's life. By interpreting the scenes from the bottom of the scroll to the top, the viewer can follow each of the thirty-seven episodes that are mentioned in the *Engizu ekotoba*. Although the scroll is not marked off and divided into various sections, each corner depicts a scene separate from the other.[36]

More than one-third of the *Engizu ekotoba* and an entire painted scroll are devoted to the stories of Gyōki's supposed ancestors. The *Engizu ekotoba* begins by explaining that Gyōki's distant ancestor, Liubang's mother, gave birth to the first emperor of the Han dynasty after dreaming about a ferocious lightning dragon. The second section of the *Engizu ekotoba* states that when Liubang was on his way to Tuli mountain, he encountered a giant snake that was blocking the road, so he cut it in half and continued on his way. Further up the road, Liubang met an old woman who cried that her son, who had disguised himself in the form of a snake, was actually the Qin emperor. The woman scorned Liubang but also predicted that the Han dynasty would soon be established. The rest of the first scroll discusses how Liubang fought Xiangyu to become the new emperor of China.

Why does the *Engizu ekotoba* get into such a detailed description of Liubang's life? There seem to be few similarities between Gyōki and Liubang's backgrounds. However, both leaders' parents were lowly officials, and the compiler of the *Engizu ekotoba* emphasizes the unusual circumstances surrounding their births. The story of Liubang shows how

the future leader of the Han dynasty gradually moved up from the role of minor Qin official to the leader of an insurgent band. Considering that warrior tales, such as the *Tale of the Heike* (*Heike Monogatari*), and Chinese legends were extremely popular during the fourteenth century, not surprisingly Gyōkaku linked Liubang's account to Gyōki's life.

In the second section of the text, which corresponds with the middle scroll, Gyōkaku changes the setting to Emperor Ōjin's court.[37] In the bottom right-hand corner of the scroll are three courtiers in formal robes who are listening to Wani, who is presumably teaching them Confucius' *Analects*. By the fourteenth century, the legend that Wani was Gyōki's distant ancestor had become widely accepted, as it appears in almost every hagiographic account of Gyōki. What is remarkable about the *Engizu ekotoba* is that in the second half of the text, the tone shifts dramatically as the compiler starts describing the construction of Gyōki's forty-nine practice halls. Until the middle section of the second scroll, Gyōkaku hardly provided any place names and detailed information about Gyōki's ancestors but, in the latter half, the compiler begins providing the dates and exact locations for each of Gyōki's construction projects. This indicates that Gyōkaku may have wanted to use the forty-nine practice halls as proof that Gyōki was an actual "historical" figure.

Chikō: the monk who condemned Gyōki

Modern historians have difficulty in determining whether Gyōki was a *shami* or a *biku* at the time when the imperial court granted him the highest post in the central monastic office. The compilers of Gyōki's biographies during the Heian and Kamakura periods were apparently unsure themselves of the answer. The *Nihon ryōiki* and the *Fusōryakki* both explain that Gyōki never took the final vows necessary for ordination (*gusokukai*), but the *Gyōki bosatsuden* and the *Gyōki bosatsu gyōjōki* (fourteenth century) treat him as a fully ordained monk. These disagreements might have led to the creation of the Chikō narrative that appears in half a dozen tale collections.

According to the *Nihon ryōiki*, Chikō was a monk of Sukita temple and renowned for his scriptural learning. He wrote several works, such as the *Commentary on the Great Wisdom Sutra* (*Daihannyakyō sho*), and instructed numerous novices.[38] He also had close ties to the imperial court until Emperor Kōnin's reign (770–781). Unfortunately, comprehensive biographies of Chikō are few, but the *Origin of Buddhist Transmission to the Three Kingdoms* (*Sangoku buppō dentsūengi*) states that he had studied the teachings of the Three Treaties Sect (*Sanron shū*) at Gangō temple.[39]

Kyōkai states that when Chikō learned about Gyōki's promotion to the monastic rank of senior primary prelate, he complained that "Gyōki is merely a partially ordained monk. How could the emperor ignore somebody with learning like myself and choose to honor a *shami* like Gyōki." As mentioned earlier, these slanderous remarks were the reason why Chikō died and suffered numerous tortures in hell. However, even after Chikō was allowed to return to his former body and apologize to Gyōki, he repeated that Gyōki had not taken final vows. Chikō may have been telling the truth when he stated that Gyōki was merely a partially ordained monk. However, for Kyōkai, Chikō's arrogant attitude toward a venerable monk who had devoted his life to improving the living conditions of others was unforgivable.

Iwasaki Takakazu argues that Chikō's contempt for Gyōki involved more than his status as a *shami*. In some of his commentaries, such as the *Commentary on the Heart Sutra* (*Hannya shinkyō jutsugi*), Chikō explicitly criticized the founder of the Hossō school's explanation of the consciousness-only doctrine.[40] By the middle of the eighth century, the struggle for imperial favor between the Hossō and the Sanron schools had intensified, and Chikō seems to have wanted the Sanron school to gain influence by holding the highest offices in the central monastic office. Thus, when Chikō discovered that a lowly Hossō monk had been chosen to be the senior primary prelate, his hopes may have been crushed. By the beginning of the Heian period, that the Hossō school enjoyed more imperial support than did the Sanron monks became clear, so Iwasaki thought that Chikō was perceived as a kind of pathetic figure.[41]

Although possibly Chikō's animosity toward Gyōki's was due to the competition between the six schools, Kyōkai does not bother to mention the names of the schools from which Chikō and Gyōki had received their scholastic training. On the basis of the overall content of the *Nihon ryōiki*, Kyōkai does not seem to have been particularly interested in sectarian or scholastic differences. Furthermore, associating Gyōki with the Hossō school at the time of his appointment to the rank of the senior primary prelate is inappropriate, because several decades had passed since he had received his vows and started constructing road-side shelters and practice halls.

During the Heian and Kamakura periods, the Chikō account developed in two separate directions. The *Sanbōe kotoba* and the *Ōjō gokurakuki* completely omitted Kyōkai's description of Chikō's scholastic background and achievements.[42] The *Sanbōe kotoba* simply states that Gyōki wrote numerous commentaries on sutras and instructed novices about the law. In other words, Chikō's achievements were transferred to Gyōki either because the compiler was not paying attention to the subject of the

sentence when he copied Kyōkai's account or because he wanted to reduce Chikō to an insignificant monk. Similarly, in the *Ōjō gokurakuki*, Chikō was portrayed as a jealous monk who retreated to a mountain temple when he learned about Gyōki's promotion. In both cases, the *Nihon ryōiki*'s account was altered so that Gyōki became the main focus.

The *Tales of Times Now Past* (*Konjaku monogatari*), compiled sometime during the twelfth century, expanded the Chikō account by explaining why he, Chikō, decided to become a Buddhist monk. The narrator states that in previous lives, Gyōki had been the daughter of a landowner in the Ōtori district, whereas Chikō had been the family's young servant named Mabukuta. The young servant was dissatisfied with his lowly status and hoped to improve the prospects for his afterlife by becoming a monk. When the master learned about Mabukuta's intentions, he pointed out that Mabukuta would not be welcomed into any temple in his present clothes, so the daughter of the household helped him by sewing him some beautiful trousers and wished him good luck in his future training. Thanks to the family's kindness, Mabukuta was able to enter Gangō temple, where he changed his name to Chikō, eventually becoming a famous high-ranking monk. The landowner's daughter passed away shortly after helping him and was reincarnated as a young monk.

By inserting this episode about Chikō's humble origins, the narrator made Chikō look even more hypocritical. In the final section of the account, Chikō is disturbed by a young monk causing a commotion during his lecture to a group of monks. When Chikō confronted the obnoxious monk, the monk replied, "The day that Mabukuta began his ascetic training, I sewed him his wisteria-patterned trousers." Shocked by the monk's knowledge of his former identity, Chikō bitterly complained that he had never been so insulted by a "backward country monk" (*inaka hōshi*). The narrator then reveals the young monk's identity as Gyōki, and adds that after careful deliberation, Chikō recognized his own arrogance. This last section portrays Gyōki as a rebellious country monk but at the same time introduces Chikō as an ungrateful priest who had forgotten the kindness of his former masters. In other words, Chikō was guilty of two offenses against Gyōki, even though he never seems to have realized fully that Gyōki was an incarnation of his former master's daughter.

In the *Ōgishō* (1135–1144) and the *Korai fūteishō* (1197) versions of this account, Chikō's ironic role as an arrogant monk with humble origins is downplayed. The *Ōgishō* describes the tale of love between Mabukuta and a young lady in the household of a powerful warlord. Mabukuta, who is introduced as a guard of the mansion, catches a glimpse of the young lady while gathering parsley in the yard and becomes lovesick.

When the young lady discovers the cause of Mabukuta's illness, she states that if he expects to earn her love, he must first learn how to write, so Mabukuta sets out to comply. Once he learns the basics of writing, the young lady tells him must furthermore get an education. Then she demands that he become a monk and study the sūtras. After he accomplishes this, the young lady tells him to improve himself by performing in ascetic activities. However, while Mabukuta is on a journey, the young lady passes away. When Mabukuta returns and learns the tragic news, naturally he grieves over her death for some time, but this incident eventually kindles his desire to be born into the Pure Land, and the narrator adds that he died a sage (*hijiri*).

The structure of this account closely resembles the *Konjaku* version, but the compiler of the *Ōgishō* presents the narrative as a poetic account of a man who is reborn into the Pure Land. The *Ōgishō* (1135–1144) was one of the first poetic anthologies that was compiled to instruct aspiring poets. The compiler, Fujiwara Kiyosuke, who was Fujiwara Shunzei's rival, wrote the anthology to instruct court nobles in the proper conception and choice of subjects in the composition of Japanese poetry. Several Buddhist anecdotes and spiritual biographies were included in the anthology, because tales describing sudden conversions and rebirths into the Pure Land had become popular since the eleventh century. The Chikō account was probably added to this poetic instruction manual, because already several poems were associated with Gyōki by the thirteenth century. The story of Mabukuta and the young lady begins when someone asks how the following poem was composed:

> The man who picked parsley ages ago,
> Could not attain what his heart desired.

The narrator then proceeds to explain the significance of Mabukuta's love and how it was used as an expedient means (*hōben*) to help him to attain birth into the Pure Land.

In the *Ōgishō* version, the confrontation scene at Chikō's lecture is omitted. Instead, the compiler adds a scene in which Gyōki is invited by the disciples of the deceased monk to give a lecture during which he hints at the relationship between the young lady and their master. The disciples eventually realize Gyōki's former identity, and one of the monks named Ninkai writes a poem about the incident. Although the *Konjaku monogatari* was composed a few decades earlier than the *Ōgishō*, it did not circulate until the Edo period, so it is doubtful that Fujiwara Kiyosuke used the *Konjaku monogatari* to write his own version of the Chikō account.[43] But in both cases, little attention was devoted to Gyōki's

background since Chikō's accomplishments occupy the central focus of the tale.

Yoneyama Takako argues that the *Ōgishō* version of the Chikō account bears close structural resemblance to the "original" *Nihon ryōiki* version.[44] However, the evidence is insufficient to establish that the *Nihon ryōiki* contained the "original" version of the Chikō account. As each compiler added poems and new anecdotes to the Chikō account, less attention was devoted to portraying Gyōki as a believable "historical" figure. For example, the controversy over Gyōki's promotion to the senior primary prelate, which was mentioned in the Nara imperial history, was completely omitted from the *Ōgishō* version. Furthermore, Gyōki appears in front of Chikō's disciples at Chikō's funeral, even though all records indicate that Gyōki passed away two decades before Chikō.

Although there are some structural similarities between the early ninth century *Nihon ryōiki* account and the twelfth century *Ōgishō*'s version of the two monks' encounter, their agendas are entirely different. The *Nihon ryōiki* and the *Ōjō gokurakuki* reduce Chikō to an arrogant monk who was restored to life because of Gyōki's magnanimity. However, the compiler of the *Ōgishō* seems to have been primarily interested in explaining how the account of Chikō's birth into the Pure Land helped inspire Ninkai in his composition of a popular poem. Also, despite these underlying differences, one can say that each compiler made the Chikō account more dramatic and entertaining by adding some poetic dialogue and exchanges.

By the fourteenth century, Gyōki had also developed a reputation as a poet. During the early medieval period, some monks believed that poetry was a hindrance to those seeking to follow the Buddhist precepts but, by the end of the Kamakura period, most people had completely disregarded the claim that using "wild words and fancy language" (*kyōgen kigō*) was a dangerous diversion. For the most part, the poems associated with Gyōki were praised because of their instructional qualities and not for their aesthetic refinement.

With the exception of poem No. 1732, which appears in Volume 9 of the *Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves* (*Manyōshū*), most poems were composed by other monks and officials using Gyōki's name to enhance the reputation of their poetic anthologies.[45] For example, the *Jade Leaves Collection* (*Gyokuyō wakashū*), which was compiled by Kyōgoku Tamekane in 1312, includes the following poem attributed to Gyōki:

> When I hear the cry of the pheasant,
> It reminds me of my father and mother

An Edo commentary, called the *Short Memoires on Kōyasan* (*Kōyasan tozan tansho*), explains that Gyōki wrote this poem when he was on Mt. Kōya, and the famous poet, Matsuo Bashō, used the image of the pheasant's mournful cry to write a similar poem. Needless to say, highly unlikely is Gyōki's visit to Mt. Kōya before the founding of the Shingon sect. What was more important for this poet was Gyōki's attachment to his deceased parents. *Gyōki bosatsu engizu ekotoba* states that Gyōki was disturbed by the pheasant's cry, because he realized that it could be the cry of his mother and father.[46] This idea was based on the anecdote in the *Gyōki bosatsu engizu ekotoba*, which explained that Gyōki had seen a man chewing on some dried fish while riding a horse. Through his bodhisattva powers, Gyōki recognized the fish as his mother and the horse as a reincarnation of his father. The Gy*ōki bosatsu engizu ekotoba* explains that ever since this incident, Gyōki was disturbed by the sight of unfortunate animals. That is why one spring day when Gyōki heard the cry of a pheasant, he was inspired to write the poem mentioned above.

The rediscovery of Gyōki's grave

As Gyōki became more widely known through such hagiographic accounts and poetry, interest was renewed in locating the practice halls that he built and the exact spot where he was buried. According to the *Origins of Chikurin Temple at Mt. Ikoma* (*Ikomayama chikurinji engi*), which was written by Jakumetsu in 1234, Gyōki's grave was rediscovered and dug up by a group of Buddhist monks in the Ōtori district.[47] Most scholars consider this to be a fabricated account until Umehara Suesada conducted a search of the Ikoma area in 1915. One of the villagers who lived at the foot of Mt. Koshi discovered a triangle-shaped stone fragment with an inscription on it. The writing on this fragment matched that of the oldest surviving copy of the *Daisōjō sharibyōki*, and further archeological research has shown that the glaze corresponds with a type used for funereal urns during the eighth century.[48] Because this inscribed stone fragment, which is now preserved in the Nara National Museum, exactly matches the wording of the thirteenth-century hand-written copy of the *Daisōjō sharibyōki*, scholars have regarded it as the oldest and most reliable account of Gyōki's life.

Jakumetsu treated the rediscovery of Gyōki's grave in the thirteenth century as a supernaturally guided event, accomplished with the guidance of Gyōki's spirit. According to the *Ikomayama chikurinji engi* on 06/24/ 1234, Gyōki appeared in a vision to a monk called Keion and told him the exact location where his bones were buried. A group of monks went

to the location described by Keion, but they did not take him seriously, so the spirits of Gyōki and his mother appeared several more times, urging Keion to dig up the grave and see the inscription written on the funeral urn. Keion was deeply troubled by these visions and by the local villagers' discovery of a cloud of white smoke engulfing the main hall of Ebara temple where Gyōki's spirit had told Keion to dig.

What is fascinating about these visions is that the narrator claims that Gyōki complained about the decline of Buddhist law and the pitiful state of the world. Although Gyōki never explicitly used the word *mappō*, possibly the narrator was referring to the "degenerate age" in which people are unable to save themselves. In Keion's vision of 08/1235, Gyōki said that digging up his grave would bring back the merits of the *dharma* (*Buppō no toku*), but if he failed to carry out the task, the entire community would suffer natural disasters, such as fires, in the months to come. Finally, Keion was unable to ignore the visions and went to dig under the second pillar of the main hall at Ebara temple. But, the villagers complained that he could not dig unless he obtained imperial permission. Keion once again hesitated but, when he finally started to dig, a little white cloud rose up to the sky, and an octagonal stone container was revealed. Within the container, Keion supposedly discovered the funereal urn and the text of the *Daisōjō sharibyōki* inscribed on its lid.[49]

The word *shari*, which appears in the grave inscription, can refer to the relics of the Buddha but, in this case, it probably signifies the bones of a lofty monk. The *Tōdaiji zokuyōroku* states that commemorative services were performed for Gyōki in 03/1259, 04/1261, and 04/1263. Also, the *Chikurinji ryakuryoku* reveals that Gyōki's grave was worshiped by the monks from all denominations during the fourteenth century.[50] Ginen states that a few decades after the discovery of *Daisōjō Sharibyōki*, a pagoda was erected and the relics were put on an altar which was dedicated to the statue of Gyōki. Additionally, each of the four walls was decorated with the paintings of Gyōki's twelve disciples and the founders of each of the major Buddhist sects.

The late Heian to the early Kamakura period marked a peak in the variety of Buddhist hagiographic accounts that were compiled. The *Gyōki nenpu* emphasized the importance of actually identifying and relocating construction sites associated with Gyōki. The rediscovery of Gyōki's grave in the thirteenth century and the composition of the *Chikurinji engi* motivated a renewed fascination with the bodhisattva image of Gyōki.

Despite the many differences in the focus of interest over the centuries, one theme continually appears in most hagiographic texts. This is the issue of Gyōki's ancestry. Medieval hagiographers gradually became more interested in elaborating, altering, and filling in the gaps of knowledge

regarding Gyōki's ancestry, his status as a monk, and his relation with Emperor Shōmu. In the age of Chinese and Mongol geopolitical dominance, it may have been necessary for Gyōkaku, the compiler of the *Gyōki bosatsu engizu ekotoba*, to downplay Gyōki's Korean roots and establish ancestral ties with the Chinese court. However, during the eighth century when Gyōki was active in his charitable projects, being descended from a Korean clan was considered honorable because numerous Korean immigrants had made significant contributions toward the compilation of the *Ritsuryō* codes and had been awarded imperial court ranks. For such medieval hagiographers as Gyōkaku, however, it was actually convenient that the eighth century biographies of Gyōki provided little information about Gyōki's background. Keeping these factors in mind, we consider what the hagiographic accounts on Gyōki tell us about Buddhist hagiography in early Japan as a whole.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen throughout the preceding chapters, the emphasis of academic studies on eminent monks has been either to discern the values and ideas that are represented in hagiographic texts or to retrace the actions and thoughts of actual historical figures. However, these projects need not be mutually exclusive. The earliest accounts of Gyōki contained in the imperial history of the Nara period went on to become incorporated into the fantastic tales of the Kamakura period.

The fine line between historical reliability and legend so frequently debated among scholars today was far less important in the Nara and Heian periods. Even the compilers of the *Shoku nihongi*, which was completed at the beginning of the Heian period, embellished the biographies of Buddhist monks they sought to glorify. Fortunately, the compilers of the imperial history of the eighth century chose not to leave out numerous passages that reveal an ambivalent attitude toward Gyōki. This Nara imperial history is unique, because it demonstrates that the imperial court altered its opinion toward Gyōki several times before choosing to honor him with the rank of the senior primary prelate.

The conventional approach taken by contemporary scholars of hagiography, regardless of which country and religious tradition they are studying, has been to examine a sample of collections from a given country, region, and period and try to pick out various themes, archetypes, tropes, and stylistic similarities common to that particular genre. John Kieschnick's *The Eminent Monk: Buddhist Ideals in Medieval Chinese Hagiography* is the most successful example of a work in English that employs this method, because the author limits himself to three collections of spiritual biographies of Chinese monks who lived between the sixth and tenth centuries.

Unfortunately, studies of Buddhist hagiography written in Japanese have tended to leave the reader overwhelmed or confused. One reason for this confusion is that they argue that a poetics was common to all

Buddhist hagiography, regardless of whether the holy men and women described belonged to the Pure Land, Zen, or other Buddhist traditions.

In Christian hagiographic accounts of medieval Europe, one also finds a certain conventional style of narration. This was because the *Lives of the Saints* (*Vitae)* had to be approved by local priests or religious orders before making their way up to the higher episcopal and papal authorities to be scrutinized for their orthodoxy or loyalty to a certain religious order's ideals. Therefore, many Christian collections of *Lives of the Saints* convey a sense that the accounts were records that had successfully survived all these examinations. The result was a rather conventional listing of acts of faith and miracles of saints composed especially for their locality or for loyalty to a certain order's ideals.

Buddhist hagiographic accounts in Japan, however, were not regarded as sacred texts to be approved by the highest monastic authorities. Quite the contrary, Buddhist hagiography of the Nara and Heian periods consist mostly of private collections that circulated only among local or imperial courtiers and among a select group of priests. The Japanese aristocratic lay believers and the monks who compiled these biographies did not hesitate to include in the prefaces detailed accounts of themselves and their reasons for recording the lives of holy men and women. Such practices hardly ever appeared in Christian hagiographic collections.

In this study, we have tried to treat each collection of spiritual biographies as an independent work, with distinct characteristics, rather than making sweeping generalizations about Japanese Buddhist hagiography or interpreting the lives of Buddhist monks in such a stereotypical manner that they end up almost indistinguishable from one another. By using Gyōki, who is one of the most popular figures of this genre, this study has endeavored to highlight the outstanding characteristics of Nara and Heian hagiography. The advantage of this approach is that it sets aside generalizations about the ways in which Japanese hagiographers portrayed their subjects and allows the reader to consider the particular reasons why each of the compilers was attracted by the figure of Gyōki.

The implications of the bodhisattva title

The earliest hagiographic accounts from the eighth and ninth centuries promoted the idea that Gyōki was an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. In Japan, the practice of designating certain extraordinary individuals as "bodhisattva" (*bosatsu*) was reserved for a few exemplary monks and emperors, although this practice had largely ended by the latter part of the Kamakura period. Although celestial bodhisattvas who

manifested such qualities as wisdom and compassion were worshiped at court, only a dozen or so names of bodhisattva monks appear in monastic records, court histories, and Buddhist hagiography during the Nara and Heian periods.[1]

The fact that the first collection of bodhisattva biographies in Japan was written by a Chinese monk during the eighth century suggests that the Japanese were still relatively unfamiliar with the bodhisattva tradition during the first half of the Nara period. *The Monastic Records from the Enryaku Era* (*Enryaku sōroku*: 770) was compiled by a Tiantai Chinese monk called Situo, who accompanied Jianzhen to teach Japanese Buddhist monks the proper procedures for ordination. Unfortunately, only fragments of the *Enryaku sōroku* survive in a thirteenth-century work. Situo begins his compilation with Prince Shōtoku, whom he calls *Bodhisattva Prince of the Imperial Palace* (*Jōgūkōtaishi bosatsu*) and continues with the Bodhisattva Gyōki. Then he goes on to relate the accounts of twenty-four monks and bodisattvas. Approximately one-half of these accounts introduce their subjects as bodhisattvas, while the other one-half describe them as eminent monks. Under the category of bodhisattva, the collection includes the emperors and empresses who generously sponsored the Buddhist monastic community, such as Emperor Tenji (626–671), Emperor Shōmu (701–756), Empress Kōmyō (701–760), and Emperor Kanmu (737–806), even though many of them never took formal vows.[2]

Within the early hagiographic accounts is a sense that compilers felt the need to catch up with developments in China. Perhaps this is the reason that many of the hagiographic collections that narrate Gyōki's achievements begin with the word "Japan" (*Nihon*) in their titles.[3] In the preface to the *Nihon ryoiki*, Kyokai states that after reading Meng Xianzhong's *Miraculous Accounts of the Diamond Wisdom Sutra* (*Jingang banruojing jiyanji*), he wanted to demonstrate that China was not the only country that could boast of eminent monks and miraculous events. Similarly, the *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki* and the *Zoku honchō ōjōden* based the style of their Pure Land biographies on Chinese collections, but they retained a self-consciousness that suggests that the Japanese monastic establishment had already evolved away from earlier models.

Some scholars may argue that, strictly speaking, such Buddhist collections as the *Nihon ryōiki* and the *Sanbōe kotoba* are not hagiography at all, because each volume consists of tales relating extraordinary incidents rather than biographical accounts of eminent monks. However, one of the distinct characteristics of Japanese Buddhist hagiography is that the idealized accounts of monks are interspersed among the collections of strange and wondrous tales. As we have seen, while demonstrating

the certainty of karmic retribution, Kyokai provides detailed biographies of Buddhist monks throughout his collection.

Gyōki was unique among the monks who were honored with the title bodhisattva in early Buddhist hagiography, because his oldest gravestone memorial, *Daisōjō sharibyōki*, states that "commoners" called him bodhisattva while he was still alive. The biography of Gyōki that appears in the Nara imperial history also confirms that monks and other disciples called him bodhisattva, but the *Shoku nihongi* compilers themselves addressed him by his monastic title *daisōjō*. These two early texts show that although the imperial court and the monastic community recognized that many people addressed Gyōki as "bodhisattva," they preferred to identify him as a high-ranking monk.

By the time Kyōkai compiled the *Nihon ryōiki*, Gyōki seems to have been explicitly associated with the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. Gyōki appears in more of these tales than does any other monk or emperor. The compiler, Kyōki, chose to leave out Gyōki's involvement in various construction projects, focusing instead on how Gyōki used his superhuman powers to warn peasants and laborers about their spiritual shortcomings. An example of this was mentioned earlier in tale II-7 of the *Nihon ryōiki*, where a learned Hossō monk, called Chikō, was punished because he was unable to perceive Gyōki's true identity as the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.

The *Nihon ryōiki* also suggests that those monks who were called "bodhisattva" during the Nara period were not usually affiliated with any particular temple. They may have taken vows at some temple at a younger age, but they spent the bulk of their lives wandering from one location to the next. The bodhisattva monks that Kyōkai describes, such as Gyōki, Yōgō, and Shari, all preached to the masses in remote regions and avoided contact with the mainstream monastic network, but their very representation in his writing suggests that all seem to have been eventually discovered by courtiers and monastic officials.

The compilation of the *Ōjō gokurakuki* at the end of the tenth century marked a new phase in the evolution of Buddhist hagiography. The tenth- and eleventh-century hagiographers seemed no longer to be satisfied with merely recording short tales about mysterious holy men who performed miraculous deeds. Rather, they wanted to use the accounts of Gyōki to uphold certain new sectarian teachings that were gaining popularity. By providing forty-eight accounts of various monks, nuns, laymen and women who left signs that they had successfully been reborn into the Amidha's Western Paradise or the Pure Land, Yoshishige no Yasutane hoped to show the accessibility of the Pure Land tradition. Yoshishige himself had been a noble who had become disillusioned with court life, and the *Ōjō gokurakuki* reflects his contempt for the mundane pleasures of court life.

By the time of the compilation of the *Sequel to the Accounts of Rebirth into the Pure Land* (*Zoku honchō ōjōden*) in the eleventh century, the aristocracy who were believed to have achieved rebirth in the Pure Land were given preferential treatment. The *Zoku honchō ōjōden* begins with accounts of emperors and nobles and gradually moves into the biographies of monks and laymen and laywomen. Even within the individual accounts, a heightened awareness of the subject's social status and family background is apparent. This does not mean that the society itself became more aristocratic, because the authority of the Heian officials was in sharp decline by the beginning of the twelfth century. The Buddhist monastic establishment had become more stratified and status-conscious by the time the second major Pure Land accounts were compiled.

With the Heian period drawing to an end and aristocratic Buddhism in decline, hagiographers began to investigate various historical issues that the earliest accounts of Gyōki had left unanswered. The *Gyōki bosatsuden* and the *Gyōki nenpu* considered whether Gyōki had formally and fully received ordination (*gusokukai*), why he could gather so many followers, and why the Nara court awarded him the highest rank of the Buddhist monastic establishment.

The *Gyōki bosatsuden* and the *Gyōki nenpu* also added some new narratives concerning the reasons that Gyōki undertook so many construction projects. The *Gyōki bosatsuden* states that Gyōki traveled around the provinces with his disciples. When he arrived at unnavigable rivers, he built bridges and road-side shelters in the vicinity. These projects eventually became so numerous that Emperor Shōmu met Gyōki while Gyōki was constructing the Izumibashi-in in 740. The *Gyōki bosatsuden* then explains that the Nara court became a sponsor of Gyōki's projects.

In contrast to the sketchy narrative of the *Gyōki bosatsuden*, the *Gyōki nenpu* provides a thorough description of the exact locations and dates of all of Gyōki's construction projects. Izumi Kochi also listed the names of the Nara and early Heian texts that he used to document his evidence. Perhaps the most interesting detail that the *Gyōki nenpu* added to earlier hagiography was that Gyōki worked on construction projects in one or two districts for several years before moving on to another area. Thus, one need not view Gyōki's projects as forty or fifty separate projects but as a series of closely related activities that may even have been undertaken simultaneously.

Although some of the accounts give credit to Gyōki alone for his numerous charitable projects, a single man in his sixties could not likely have made a significant difference in the actual construction of practice halls and road-side shelters. As Nakai Shinkō suggests, Gyōki must have been both a charismatic leader and a clever politician who was well-

respected by the local peasants and powerful families throughout the *kinai*.[4] His familiarity with the local peasants' agricultural problems discussed in the *Shoku nihongi* and the *Gyōki nenpu* suggest that he had traveled extensively before he became active in various construction projects.

Finally, a recurrent motif highlighted in nearly every account is Gyōki's image as a wandering monk. Because the exact nature of his travels was not completely understood, a wide range of interpretations exists among compilers. Kyōkai viewed the Gyōki's wanderings as a way to preach sermons and instruct the locals about the hidden obstacles to progress along the Buddha's path, things that they were unable to perceive on their own. With the exception of one or two tales, the setting of the narratives in the *Nihon ryōiki* are rural, and Gyōki's superhuman powers allowed him to warn people who were about to incurr karmic retribution for their sins.

Gyōki's wandering can also be interpreted as a deliberate means of distancing himself from the Nara court, which was trying to restrict the activities of Buddhist monks and nuns. The imperial court condemned Gyōki for wandering around and preaching to the masses, but hagiographic accounts are silent about any friction with the Nara court. Gyōki's gravestone memorial, *Daisōjō sharibyōki*, states that the imperial court commended him for his good works by awarding him the highest imperial rank. The *Ōjō gokurakuki* in the tenth century took this a step further and portrayed Gyōki as an agent of the imperial court. When Bodhisena arrived in Japan, it was Gyōki, accompanied by monks and officials from three different bureaus, who greeted the Indian monk on behalf of the imperial court.

Both the *Daisōjō sharibyōki* and the *Gyōki nenpu* indicate that Gyōki corresponded with Emperor Shomu, but all other sources state that it was the emperor who actually visited Izumibashi-in while Gyōki was working on various construction projects. There is little doubt that the court needed the cooperation of such a popular figure as Gyōki to solidify its own power and legitimize its control over the Buddhist monastic establishment. However, if one considers the situation from an alternative perspective, this relationship can also be seen as symbiotic. Gyōki built bridges, dikes, and road-side shelters because the state had not provided a stable infrastructure. By the same token, although he worked on construction projects that the state was not willing to undertake, by erecting bridges and better roads, Gyōki actually made it easier for the peasants to bring their produce to submit for taxation in the capital. So in the end, the emperor's cause was helped by Gyōki's works and Gyōki's reputation and status were, in turn, confirmed and enhanced by the emperor.

New directions

A work that is an end in itself has relatively little scholarly value. Similarly, works that present Gyōki as an historical anomaly or studies that treat only his medieval hagiography miss the sociopolitical impact that Gyōki's popular movement had on later periods. Hence, any work that examines Gyōki must confront larger historical issues, such as the new burdens placed on peasants and laborers when the *Ritsuryō* codes began to be enforced. Gyōki was active when the Nara court was in the process of defining itself as the predominant power of a newly centralized Japanese state. Why did so many people desert the various imperial projects? How much authority did the Nara court give local officials? To what extent was this power exercised? Gyōki's life and work surely were influenced by these contextual factors and he influenced them in turn. This study has simply scratched the surface of these issues. Pursuing them fully could easily fill a second volume.

Future studies might also focus on the disjunction between prescriptive labels, such as "state Buddhism" (*kokka bukkyō*), and the actual diversity of activities that the Buddhist clergy engaged in during the Nara period. As we have already seen, such scholars as Naobayashi Futai and Sakuma Ryū have exaggerated the stability and authority of the monastic establishment during the Nara period. With regard to the popular representations of Gyōki, one could also examine regional accounts present in still extant folklore rather than focus exclusively on pre-modern texts. Tsuruoka Shizuo, for example, has recently made a pioneering study of twentieth-century folktales that portray Gyōki as a shamanic figure who expounded on the notion that *kami* are incarnations of Buddhist deities.[5] A consideration of the more than two hundred temples in remote regions that claim Gyōki as their founder leaves little doubt about the existence of other interesting legends and tales that continue to capture the popular imagination.

APPENDIX

A full translation of the most important histories and biographies that describe the achievements of Gyōki are listed here in chronological order.

1. Shoku Nihongi biography of Gyōki (749, edited in 797)

On the second day of the second month in 749, the senior primary prelate, Gyōki, passed away. He had been a Buddhist monk of Yakushi temple. Gyōki originally was from Izumi Province and his surname before ordination had been Koshi. Gyōki was naturally endowed with virtue and wisdom, so when he studied the consciousness-only doctrine of the Yogācāra school, he immediately penetrated its content. Afterwards, he traveled around the province and instructed people about the teaching of the Buddha. More than one thousand monks and lay people followed him wherever he went. When people heard that Gyōki was going to be passing by, the streets became congested with people who hoped to get a glimpse of the Buddhist monk. Gyōki led each person to the path of enlightenment according to his or her capacity. He also took his disciples to various treacherous spots where they built dikes and bridges. Those who heard about Gyōki's activities joined him, so the facilities were completed in a very short time. The local farmers are benefiting from the facilities that Gyōki constructed to this very day.

Emperor Shōmu, who deeply revered Gyōki, issued and imperial edict to award him the title of senior primary prelate. Nine hundred monks were also ordained on this occasion. People called Gyōki "bodhisattva", because of his miraculous powers.

Gyōki was constantly on the road, and wherever he stopped, he erected temples and practice halls. Within the inner provinces alone,

there were forty-nine sites that he worked on. The roads that he helped construct can also be found in various locations. Gyōki's disciples have upheld the precepts to the present day, and when he passed away, he was eighty years old.

2. Daisōjō Sharibyōki

(The Gravestone Memorial of the Senior Primary Prelate 749)

The full translation can be found in Chapter 1

3. Nihon Ryōiki

(Miraculous Tales of Ancient Japan 822)

Tale II-2

Master Shingon, who was also known as Chinuno Agatanushi, was a wealthy landlord of the Izumi district during the reign of Emperor Shōmu. By the gate of his large property, there was a giant tree in which dwelt a mother crow and her babies. While the mother nestled her babies, the father crow flew from place to place searching for food to nurture his family in the nest. During the father's absence, other male crows came and preened for the mother until she eventually became restless and flew away with a new partner. When the father crow finally returned to the nest with food in his beak, he discovered that his mate had disappeared. Taking pity on his hungry babies, the father stayed with them for several days without eating any food himself. The landlord, who had been observing everything from below, ordered someone to climb up the tree and thus he learned that the male crow had died with the baby birds tucked under his wings.

The landlord became despondent after seeing the crows' licentious behavior and abandoned his own wife, children and imperial post to take monastic vows. After some time, he took on the monastic name of Shingon and followed Master Gyōki to perform good works. The former landlord firmly vowed to die with Master Gyōki, so that he might be reborn into the Western Paradise.

Shingon's wife was also from a good household. After her husband departed, she did not give her heart away but remained chaste. When her child became ill and was on the verge of death, the child asked her if he could have one more taste of her milk. When the child tasted his mother's milk for the last time, he exclaimed, "How sweet your milk is! Now I can die!" Then the child immediately passed away. The

landlord's wife yearned for her deceased child and eventually she took vows and became a nun. Like her former husband, she dedicated her life to the performance of good works.

As for Shingon, he lacked the good fortune to work with Gyōki until the time of his master's death. When Shingon passed away, Gyōki lamented his disciple's death and composed the following poem:

> Crows are regarded as unfaithful creatures.
> Although you vowed to be together to the end,
> You have departed without me.[1]

Then lighting the funerial pyre, Gyōki placed a scented pine on top, and when it began to rain, he lay a stone instrument upon the body. Observing the vulgar behavior of the crows, Shingon had set his heart on to the path of enlightenment. By using his own suffering as an expedient means, Shingon had succeeded in finding the path to liberation.

The myriad creatures living in the world of desire engage in similar vulgar acts. Those who despise the world will eventually rebel against it, and those who are foolish will endlessly desire things.

Chinuno Agatanushi was a capable man. Observing the promiscuous behavior of crows, he learned to despise all things and departed from the floating world. By performing meritorious acts and asking for the Buddha's guidance, Shingon was able to maintain equanimity and truly detested impurity.

Tale II-7

Shaku Chikō from Kawachi province was a monk of Sukita temple in Asukabe district. His name before ordination had been Sukita no Muraji. He was an erudite man and wrote commentaries on the *Ullambana Sutra*, the *Great Wisdom Sutra* and others. Chikō was also well-known for transmitting Buddhist teachings to numerous students.

During the same period, there was another monk called Gyōki who had received his preliminary vows. He was known as Koshi no Fubito before ordination. Gyōki resided in Kunibiki district, Koshi no michi. His mother was the daughter of Hachida no Kusushi, who resided in Ōtori district, Izumi province. Having abandoned all forms of desire, Gyōki preached the dharma and instructed those who were lost. From the day he was born, Gyōki naturally understood the Buddhist way. On the surface, Gyōki seemed like any other Buddhist monk, but he actually hid the virtues of the bodhisattva within. Since Emperor Shōmu

recognized Gyōki's exceptional qualities, he treated the monk with utmost respect. Commoners also venerated Gyōki and called him bodhisattva.

During the winter of the eleventh month in 745, Gyōki was promoted to the position of senior primary prelate. Hearing the news, Chikō became jealous and spoke ill of Gyōki. "I am a man of prudence and Gyōki is nothing more than a partially ordained monk. How could the emperor disregard my intellect and promote Gyōki?"

After this incident, Chikō returned to Sukita temple and resided there for a while. But then he soon came down with a bad case of dysentery and passed away within a month of Chikō. On his deathbed, Chikō gathered his disciples and warned them, "When I die, do not cremate my body for nine or ten days. Just wait! If my students ask about me, just tell them I have some business to attend far away." Keeping their master's last words in mind, the disciples held a memorial service and recalled that they had been warned not to tell others the truth. When their master passed away, the disciples closed the shutter of the bedroom window, and wept quietly waiting night and day for the customary period of mourning to pass. When the students asked Chikō's disciples about their master's absence, the disciples replied as they had been instructed.

Meanwhile, Yama, the King of Hell, sent two servants to summon Chikō to his court. Chikō traveled west until he arrived at a golden pavilion. When he asked the attendants the name of the structure, the attendants answered, "Have you not heard? It is here that a famous personage known throughout Japan for his wisdom is going to be reborn. Surely you must have heard of the Bodhisattva Gyōki?" At the entrance of the pavilion stood two fully-armored divine beings wearing red wigs. The attendants got down on their knees and announced the arrival of the party. Then the guards at the gate asked, "Are you the so-called Buddhist monk Chikō of Mizoho province Japan?" Chikō answered, "Yes." Then the guards pointed north and said, "Take this path," so Chikō set out with two attendants. Since it was pitch dark, Chikō desired a torch. After awhile, he felt unbearable heat burning his face and was greatly frightened, but he resolved to continue on. When some more time had elapsed, Chikō asked, "Why is it so hot?" and the attendants answered, "It is because you are in hell where you are about to be burned up!"

As he marched on, Chikō saw a red hot iron pillar. The attendants ordered him to embrace the pillar, so Chikō did as he was told. Soon his skin and muscles melted away and all that remained was his bones. After three more days passed, the attendants poked him with an old broom and shouted, "Come alive! Come alive!" Soon Chikō's body took on its old form. Then once again Chikō and his attendants set out north until they

arrived at a bronze pillar that was even hotter than the one before. Although Chikō knew that this was a horrible instrument, he was strangely attracted to the pillar. The attendants ordered Chikō to embrace it, so he obediently complied and immediately his entire body burned up.

Three days later, the attendants once again brought out a broom and poked him until Chikō revived. Then for the third time he headed north until he saw a wave of heat cover the sky. A flying bird got caught in the wave and fell to the ground. "Where am I?" cried Chikō. "This is the Avici hell where you're going to be fried!" As soon as the guard uttered these words, Chikō was thrown into the inferno. But after some time when a bell rang, his body cooled off again, so the tortures could be resumed.

Three days later, the attendants stopped by and slapped the side of the torture chamber and shouted, "Revive!" When Chikō returned to his senses, he was once again urged to move on. After a while Chikō found himself in front of the golden pavilion that he had seen at the beginning of his journey in hell. "So I've finally returned," Chikō cried and the two attendants who had accompanied him all along explained, "The reason why you have suffered this fate is because you slandered the Bodhisattva Gyōki while you lived in Japan. You have been sent here to make amends for this sin. The venerable bodhisattva is nearly finished with his preaching and will soon be reborn in this golden pavilion. He may arrive here at any moment." Then the guards standing by the gate said, "Whatever you do, don't consume the food that has been roasted by the fire that the great turtle exhales!"[2]

Chikō headed east with the attendants and journeyed for nine more days until he returned to the land of the living. When Chikō finally called for his disciples, they wept for joy. Then he sighed deeply and described all that he had witnessed in hell. After some time, Chikō recalled his fearful memories and said, "I must go to Gyōki and tell him that I had been jealous of his fame." At the time, the Bodhisattva Gyōki was in Naniwa overseeing the construction of bridges, the digging of canals and the building of a port. After recovering from his nine-day departure from the world, Chikō went to seek out the bodhisattva.

Gyōki read Chikō's thoughts through his special powers and anticipated his arrival. When Chikō arrived, Gyōki smiled and said, "Why is it that we have not met before?"[3] In a repentant tone, Chikō replied, "Since I was jealous of your lofty character, I bragged that I was an upright monk endowed with virtue. I accused you of being an unenlightened monk who had not even received full vows. What's more, I complained that Emperor Shōmu disregarded me and awarded you the title of senior primary prelate. Because of my blasphemy, I was

summoned by King Yama and was strapped against red hot bronze and steel pillars for nine days to vindicate myself. I still fear that my sins will affect my future lives and beg you for mercy." Gyōki listened with an amiable expression. "I also witnessed your future residence in the next world," Chiko added. Hearing these words, Gyōki exclaimed that this truly was a blessing. A person's mouth is the gate of disaster and a tongue cuts virtue like a blade. As the *Wondrous Bodhisattva Light Sutra* states, an individual who spoke ill of the Bodhisattvas Nōzai and Genten continued to be reborn as a child of a prostitute for ninety-one kalpas. After being abandoned by his mother, the sinner was eaten alive by foxes and wolves and reborn countless times for this single offence.

After their reunion, Chikō venerated the Bodhisattva Gyōki until he passed away. A memorial service was performed and Gyōki's remains were buried on Mt. Ikoma. The gods then transported his spirit to the golden pavilion, and Chikō spread Gyōki's teachings and guided those who had digressed from the true path. During the reign of Emperor Shirakabe, Chikō finally departed from this life having transmitted his wisdom.

Tale II-8

Okisome was the daughter of a lay nun who resided in the Tomi nunnery in Nara. Her heart was in accordance with the way and she never indulged in sexual intercourse. Okisome full-heartedly devoted herself to gathering edible plants and never failed to offer them to the virtuous master Gyōki.

One day when Okisome entered the mountains as usual to gather vegetables, she saw a giant snake about to swallow a bull frog. Imploring the giant snake, she asked him to free the frog, but the snake ignored her and proceeded to swallow the creature. Once again Okisome asked for the snake's mercy and pleaded, "If you would release the bull frog, I will become your wife." Hearing these words, the snake lifted his head high to examine her appearance and vomited out the frog that he had swallowed. The woman then told the serpent to come to her house after seven days. When the appointed day arrived, the woman locked up the house and filled every hole, so the serpent could not enter. When the snake arrived, it banged its giant tail against the walls and the woman trembled with fear.

The next day, she left the house and went to see Gyōki at his residence in Ikomayama temple. Gyōki said, "Don't allow the serpent to do as he pleases. But first you should receive formal vows." Gyōki administered the precepts required of all lay monks and nuns on that very day.[4] On her way home, Okisome met an old man carrying a giant crab. Turning

to the stranger she said, "Dear sir, where have you come from? Will you please release the crab you have with you?"

The old man replied, "I am Tsukumo no Kanimaro of the Uhara district, Settsu province. I am seventy-eight and have no children to depend upon. When I went to Naniwa today, I happened to catch this crab, but I have a person to whom I owe a favor, so I cannot give it to you." Upon hearing the story, the woman took off her outer *kimono* and offered it to the old man in exchange for the crab's life, but the old man was still unwilling. Then she took off another garment and offered it to save the crab's life and the old man agreed. Having saved the crab's life, she took the creature to Gyōki. Seeing the poor crab, Gyōki offered some prayers, released it and praised Okisome for her virtue.

That very night happened to be the eighth night since she encountered the giant serpent. The serpent climbed over the wall around her house and slithered through the grass until it reached the room where the woman lay trembling. But just before the snake reached her bed, a sudden commotion was heard. The next morning Okisome discovered that the snake had been sliced to pieces by a crab.

Okisome realized that the vows she had taken protected her and that the crab she had saved had repaid her for her kindness. Since she was curious to know more about the man she had met in the forest, she asked around and discovered that the name he had told her did not even exist. The old man no doubt had been an ascetic in disguise.

Tale II-29

In the village of Gangō temple in the old capital, a group of monks held a sermon meeting and invited the Great Master Gyōki to preach for seven days. Monks and lay persons gathered to hear the preaching of the dharma. Among them was a woman who had oiled her hair with the fat of a boar. Noticing her, the great master shouted, "I smell something intolerable in this place. A woman here has covered her head with blood. Take her away right now!" Ashamed of herself, the woman left the sermon immediately. To ordinary eyes, her beauty anointment is indeed just grease, but to a holy ascetic, it appeared as the blood of a wild boar. Gyōki is indeed the Japanese incarnation of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. He normally disguised himself as an ascetic.

Tale II-30

The venerable Master Gyōki constructed a port and dug a canal along the Naniwa river. Monks, lay people, nobles and commoners gathered

to hear Gyōki preach the teachings of the dharma. On one occasion, a woman of Kawamura village in Wakae county, Kawachi province brought her child along to listen to Gyōki's sermon, but the child's howling prevented her from hearing his precious teaching. The child was about ten years old, but still could not walk, so his mother had to breast-feed him. Observing the child nursing nosily, the great master shouted, "You over there, take your child away and throw him in the river!" Hearing these words, the crowd whispered to each other and said, "Merciful sage, why do you say such things?" The mother held her child tightly and continued to listen to the sermon despite Gyōki's warning.

To everyone's surprise, the mother came with her child again the next day to listen to Gyōki's sermon. But the child cried hysterically making it impossible for the audience to hear. The great master once again urged the mother to throw the child into the river. The mother distrusted his words, but could not bear the master's pressure for long, so she left the audience and threw her child into the river. To her astonishment, the child floated to the surface and treaded water with its legs and hands. Then opening his eyes widely, the child cried accusingly, "How regrettable! I have only been able to consume three years' worth of the food you owe me!" Horrified as she was, the mother returned to the sermon. The great master asked her if she had thrown her child into the river. The mother nodded and carefully explained what had happened. The great master then replied, "In a former life you failed to pay him what you owed, so he took on the form of a child in this life in order to consume your food. This child is your former landlord."

Such a sin is truly regrettable! How can one die without paying one's debts? If one passes away without repaying what one owes, there surely will be a punishment. That is why it is written in the *Shuchō kyō* that one will be reborn as a cow and burdened with heavy loads if one owes even a grain of salt.

4. Sanbōekotoba

(The Illustrated Text on the Three Treasures 984)

Tale II-3

The Bodhisattva Gyōki was originally a monk of Yakushi temple. His surname before ordination was Kose, and he resided in Ōtori district, Izumi province before becoming a monk. He shaved his head as a young man and devoted himself to the study of the consciousness-only doctrine of the Yogācāra school. Traveling throughout the provinces, Gyōki

revealed the Buddha's path to everyone he met. He taught the dharma through action, so everywhere he went people left their houses and strove to see him. When Gyōki came upon unnavigable rivers, he built bridges and dikes, and when he came upon suitable locations, he erected temples and practice halls. Within the provinces around the capital, Gyōki worked at forty-nine different sites, and in other distant areas he constructed charitable facilities. Many of the temples are popular centers of worship to this very day. At almost every region that the bodhisattva visited, he erected practice halls and other structures.

On one occasion when Gyōki was on his way back to his home town, he met a group of people who were about to eat some fish they had caught. Although Gyōki scolded them for killing and eating animals, they ignored his chastisements and insisted that he try a catfish they had roasted. Gyōki put the small fish in his mouth for a moment, but immediately spit it out without having chewed the creature. Then the fish reappeared in the pond transformed itself into numerous tiny minnows. Having witnessed this miraculous occurrence, the bystanders repented their sins.

Back in the old capital, the villagers of Gangō temple invited Gyōki to deliver a series of sermons for seven consecutive days. Lay men, women, monks and nuns all gathered to hear him. Among them was a woman who had applied the fat of a deer all over her forehead. Since she was at the very back of the crowd, nobody paid particular attention to her. But Gyōki spotted her from afar and said, "There is an offensive smell in this place. A woman here has covered her forehead with the fat of an animal." Embarrassed by the bodhisattva's words, the woman immediately left the crowd, surprising everyone around her. Such astounding incidents occurred frequently.

Emperor Shōmu deeply revered Gyōki and regarded him as a teacher of all sentient beings. So in the winter of 744, Emperor Shōmu granted Gyōki the title of senior primary prelate and gave permission for four hundred Buddhist monks to be ordained. At the time, there was another venerable monk called Chikō who was known for his virtue and wisdom. Even before Gyōki became the senior primary prelate, Chikō had written numerous commentaries on Buddhist sutras. Envious of Gyōki's reputation, Chikō complained, "I am a man of wisdom and Gyōki is nothing more than a partially ordained monk. For what reason does the emperor praise Gyōki and neglect me?" After this incident, Chikō returned to Sukita temple in Kawachi province where he soon became ill and passed away. But ten days later, Chikō came back to life and said, "Yama, the King of Hell summoned me to his court and ordered that I immediately depart for an unknown destination. I walked along the road until I came

to a pavilion decorated with gold. When I asked the guard what kind of building it was, he replied that it was where the Bodhisattva Gyōki would be reborn after his death. As I journeyed further, I came upon a place with blazing smoke and flames, so I asked the attendant where I was. The attendant replied that it was the hell, where I was about to be tortured. After walking a little further, I was suddenly beaten with a stick and forced to embrace a flaming iron pillar. Instantly, all my flesh was burned away and my bones crumbled into ashes. These tortures were repeated innumerable times until I was finally summoned to King Yama's court. There the guards admonished me, 'Your sin of slandering the Bodhisattva Gyōki, who presently resides in Mizuho province of Japan, was extremely grave. To have you reflect upon this offense, you were summoned here.' Having listened to this explanation, I was taken out by an attendant and was mercifully allowed to return to this life."

5. Gyōki Bosatsuden

(The Biography of the Bodhisattva Gyōki, eleventh century)

In order to preserve the thoughts and deeds of lofty monks, people carve statues and write memorials. King Wenxuan (of China), who was greatly impressed by a virtuous Buddhist monk, wrote the monk's biography, and Sun Xinwen composed several accounts of the lives of venerable monks. These writings and statues have survived to this very day and the virtue of these monks will never perish.

As for the Bodhisattva Gyōki, he was an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī who resided in the Qingling mountains. In order to spread the dharma to the masses below, Gyōki left his lotus seat and entered his mother's womb. In 668 he was born in Ebara village, Ōtori district, Izumi province. His father was Koshi no Fubito and his mother was the daughter of Hachida no Kusushi. Gyōki was a descendent of Prince Wani and his name before ordination was Fumikubi. From the time Gyōki was a boy, he talked with others and led them to the Buddha's path regardless of whether they were male or female, young or old. While instructing people about the importance of good deeds, Gyōki himself became a novice at the age of fifteen. At twenty-four he received his preliminary vows at Takamiya temple from Master Tokkō. Then under the tutelage of Sadaki Shiragi, he entered Hōkō temple until he was transferred to Yakushi temple. Gyōki studied the Hossō doctrine and naturally practiced its teachings without ever having been instructed. In addition, he composed a volume of commentaries on the consciousness-only doctrine of the Yogācāra school, highlighting its most important principles. He accomp-

lished this in an extremely short time, so he was able to remain in the temple for three more months meditating on the meaning of the six realms.[5] After this, Gyōki wandered about, wearing a course garment and carrying a begging bowl. At times he slept on thorn bushes and on other occasions, he used a smooth stone for a pillow. Wherever Gyōki went, he erected prayer altars. Where it was impossible to cross rivers, he built bridges, and where the wind and waves caused much suffering, he constructed protective shelters. During the summers, Gyōki worried about the crops and built dikes, and when winter arrived, he usually erected temples at locations where many people gathered.

From 704 onwards, Gyōki hid himself in the mountains and nobody knew his whereabouts. From 705 to 707, he took care of his mother at Sakidō, after which time her condition seriously deteriorated. The two of them then moved to a mountain hut on Mt. Ikoma where Gyōki performed his filial duties. His mother passed away at the beginning of 710. In accordance with prescribed mourning ritual, Gyōki wore a coarse robe and ate very little. After three years of mourning, Gyōki once again began to carry the burden of others, and soon one person after another converted to his teachings. Tens of thousands of people joined him to build forty-four monasteries, fifteen nunneries, six bridges, three irrigation canals, nine road-side shelters, two ports, fifteen ponds, eleven canals, one road and one well.

During the third day of the fifth month in 721, the court went on an imperial tour and stopped by Kyoto where two monks were ordained. At the time, Gyōki happened to be in the vicinity and man called Fumi no Ōtsu offered his house to the bodhisattva. Gyōki converted the house into a prayer hall and called it Sugawara temple. On the third day of the eleventh month in 731, the emperor visited Sugawara temple and had one hundred more monks ordained. Thereafter, the temple was known as Kikō temple.

From the first day of the ninth month in 725, Gyōki and his disciples began a series of large scale projects. Climbing treacherous mountains, they arrived at a river where there were no boats to cross. As they began to wade across, one of the disciples saw an old pillar standing by itself in the middle of the river. The Bodhisattva Gyōki inquired about the pillar and someone answered, "This is where Master Sonsen built a bridge in the old days." Hearing this, the bodhisattva vowed to reconstruct the bridge across the Yamazaki River and began building on the thirteenth day of the ninth month in 731. In the third month of 733, Emperor Shōmu and his court stopped by the facility and offered Gyōki a valuable cart. After participating in an ordination ceremony of thirty-five monks, the bodhisattva composed the following poem:

The cart that you presented to me,
How can I accept it?
I'm not worthy of such a gift.

During the second day of the seventh month in 733, Gyōki visited Zengen temple by boat. At a particular spot, there were more than two thousand lotus flowers. As they followed the floating flowers on the surface of the river, they encountered three monks on boats. One of them was Bodhisena, the other was a village monk and the third was a Chinese monk. Bodhisena recognized Gyōki from afar and chanted a *dharani.*[6] Gyōki replied with a similar mystical phrase. Bodhisena then read the following poem:

I have ventured from Kopilavastu[7]
To meet the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī
Who resides in Japan.

The people around them were astonished that the two seemed to know each other. Since this incidence, people began to honor the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. In the same year twenty monks were ordained. Gyōki remained in the region and planted a garden while one hundred and eighty four more monks were ordained. In the spring of 741, Gyōki stayed at Senbashi-in, and on the seventeenth day of the third month, the emperor stopped by for a visit. After chatting the entire day, Gyōki explained how they had built various Buddhist temples and practice halls. Greatly impressed by his account, the emperor promised that he would not allow Gyōki's facilities to be forgotten. The emperor also donated one hundred *ko* of land without the interference of officials. On the twelfth day of the sixth month, the Minister of the Left, Tachibana no Moroe, stopped by and donated fifty *ko* of land. His followers carved four statues of eminent Buddhist monks and enshrined them inside Izumibashi-in. On the twenty-six day of the sixth month, the emperor once again traveled down the Izumi river and invited Gyōki to an all day concert. The minister of the left played the lute and composed the following poem:

It is truly fortunate to be able to meet a person who is like the dew on the lotus flower.

The emperor also dedicated a poem to Gyōki that read,

I do not deserve to meet
A person who is precious
Like the dew on the lotus flower.

The emperor insisted on giving Gyōki even more property, but the bodhisattva would not accept it, so the officials filed the ownership documents in a storehouse for posterity.

Small and large temples alike read sutras aloud to commemorate the meeting between the bodhisattva and the emperor. On the twenty-seventh day of the second month in 742, the emperor ordered Hata no Horikawa to record Gyōki's wanderings and great deeds in a single volume.[8] On the fifth day of the fourth month in 742, the emperor appointed Gyōki to be the senior primary prelate. By this time, Gyōki had reached the ripe old age of eighty. In 744 the emperor sent Gyōshin to present a document promising nine hundred *ko* of land, but Gyōki still would not accept it.

After this incident, the emperor officially converted to Buddhism. On the twenty-sixth day of the eleventh month, the newly converted emperor visited Sugawara temple and had one hundred more monks ordained. On the twenty-fifth day of the first month in 745, the emperor invited the bodhisattva to Heijō island palace. On this occasion, the first imperial consort and the empress both received formal vows from Gyōki and became his disciples. The emperor received the Buddhist name Manshō, while the first imperial consort and the empress assumed the names Tokuman and Manfuku respectively. From then on, the court also referred to the senior primary prelate as bodhisattva.

After this memorable event, on the second day of the second month, Gyōki lay down on his right side and passed away in peace at the southwestern wing of Sugawara temple. Kōshin was among the disciples who witnessed their master's final moment. As Kōshin rubbed Gyōki's forehead, his master said, "I entrust to you the temples and practice halls that we built to you. Make sure that they are properly maintained." Then turning to another disciple, Gyōki said, "A man's mouth is like a ferocious tiger that brings about certain destruction. His tongue will cut your life short like a sword. Act as if your mouth is your nose, and there will be no further troubles after your death. When a tiger dies, he leaves his skin behind. When a man passes away, all that remains is his reputation." Having said these things, Gyōki composed the following poem:

Man's existence is nothing more than a temporary hut.
All one can do is to desire to become a buddha.

Then around midnight, Gyōki finally passed away. His memorial service was held at the eastern side of Mt. Namatori in Heguri district, Yamato province. Men, children, nobles, and commenors gathered like a storm of clouds to witness the burial. All were moved to tears.

Life and death are inescapable. If a holy sage ends up like this, how much more unavoidable is death for a foolish person. Bodhisena who was at the memorial service composed the following poem:

> Vulture Peak where we made our vows,
> To the Shakamuni Buddha,
> Our spirits will never diminish.

Gyōki was born on his mother's estate among the Hachida clan and his father belonged to the Koshi clan. His father was called Koshi no Obito and his mother was Hachida Tomoko. When Gyōki's mother gave birth, her child did not seem alive, so the parents put him in a clay jar and left him by a nettle tree facing west. At the time, a monk who was chanting a *dharani* happened to be passing by. Gyōki heard the spiritual words and was overjoyed, so the monk lifted the clay jar and found a new-born infant. Convinced that the child was an incarnation of some divine being, his parents took him back and raised him. In time, Gyōki revealed the attributes of a bodhisattva and earned his holy name.

6. Gyōki Nenpu

(The Chronological Record of Gyōki 1175)

[A selection from the Records of 741 is translated here.]

In the year that Gyōki turned seventy-four, Emperor Shōmu visited the Izumibashi-in in Yamashiro province. When the emperor went to see the senior primary prelate on the seventeenth day of the third month, the two spent the entire day discussing various subjects. Gyōki remarked that all large kingdoms are thought to have orphanages to care for children without parents, but in this kingdom there were no such facilities. Gyōki asked the emperor if he would not consider erecting such facilities in the area. The emperor declared that he would immediately issue an edict ordering the construction of orphanages. Furthermore, he told the bodhisattva that his facilities would not be forgotten in ages to come and refused to let officials interfere with the drafting of his edict. The emperor donated one hundred *ko* of land and on the sixteenth day of the sixth month, the minister of the left, Tachibana no Moroe also gave fifty *ko* of land. The minister's followers carved four

statues of eminent Buddhist monks and enshrined them inside Izumibashi-in.

On the twenty-sixth day of the same month, the emperor rode a boat down the Izumi river to invite Gyōki for a day of music. The minister played the lute and composed the following poem:

> It is truly fortunate to meet a person,
> Who is precious like the dew on a lotus flower.

And the emperor also added,

> Just when I desired to meet a flower-like person,
> You appeared before my eyes.

The emperor offered to donate even more land on the spot, but Gyōki refused to accept it. Small and large temples alike read sutras aloud to commemorate the meeting between the bodhisattva and the emperor.

On the nineteenth of the third month in 741, a scribe recorded Gyōki's major construction projects. They included:

Six bridges

Izumi Bridge: Sōraku District, Izumi Village
Yamazaki Bridge: Otokuni District, Yamazaki Village
These two bridges are located in Yamashiro province. Construction began on the twelfth day of the ninth month in 725.

Takase Bridge: Shimashita District, Takase Village
Chōsei Bridge
Nakagawa Bridge
Horie Bridge
These four bridges are located in Settsu Province.

One major road, starting at Takase and going through Mt. Ikoma is located between Settsu Province, Ibaragi District and Kawachi Province.

Fifteen ponds

Sayama Pond: Kawachi Province, Kita District, Sayama Village
Omuro Pond: Ōtori District, Doshi Village
Chōdo Pond: same area
Senkawa Pond: same district, Fukai Village
Hinō Pond: same district, Hachida Village

Tsurata Pond: same district, Hishimobe Village
Kumeta Pond: Izumi Minami District, Tajihi Village
Monobeta pond: same area
(All eight ponds mentioned above are located in Izumi Province.)

Konyō Upper Pond
Konyō Lower Pond
Inmae Pond
Nakafuseo Pond
Chōkō Pond
(All five ponds mentioned above are located in Kawanabe District, Yamamoto Village.)

Aribe Pond: Toyoshima District, Minōka Village

Seven canals
Furubayashi Canal: length, 3,200 *jō*,[9] width, 6 *shaku*,[10] depth, 4 *shaku*
Konyō Upper Canal: length, 1,200 *jō*; width, 6 *shaku*; depth, 4 *shaku*
(These two canals were dug at Settsu Province, Kawachi District, Yamamoto Village.)

Konyō Lower Canal: length, 1,200 *jō*; width, 6 *shaku*; depth, 6 *shaku*
(Same location as above)

Chokō Canal: length, 60 *jō*; width, 6 *shaku*; depth, 6 *shaku*
(Dug at Settsu Province, Nishinari District)

Monobeta Canal: length, 60 *jō*; width, 5 *shaku*; depth, 5 *shaku*
Kumeta Canal: length, 2,000 *jō*; width, 5 *shaku*
(Same location as above)

Three drainage ditches
Takase Ditch: Ibarata District, Takase Village
Kanmuro Ditch: Ibarata District, Kanmuro Village
Ibarata Ditch: Ibarata District, Ibarata Village
(All three of these ditches were dug in Kawachi Province.)

Two ports
Ōwata Port: Settsu Province, Tobara District, Uji Village
Kamimae Port: Izumi Province, Hine District, Hine Village

Four irrigation canals

Himashima Canal: length, 600 *jō*; width, 80 *jō*; depth, 6 *jō,* 5 *shaku*
(Built in Nishinari district, Tsumori Village)

Shirasagi-shima Canal: length, 100 *jō*; width, 60 *jō*; depth, 9 *shaku*
(Built in Nishinari District, Tsumori Village)

Tsugita Canal: length, 800 *jō*; width, 12 *jō*; depth, 8 *shaku*
(Built in Kawachi Province, Tsugita District, Ōniwa Village. The date in which Gyōki undertook this project could not be ascertained.)

Nine road-side shelters

(Three have survived, and six have collapsed.)
Ōe Shelter: Otokuni District, Ōe Village
Izumidera Shelter: Sōraku District, Kōri Village
(The two facilities mentioned above are located in Yamashiro Province.)

Konyō Shelter: Kawanabe District, Konyō Village
Tarunaga Shelter: Toyoshima District, Tarunaga Village
Tabi Shelter: Nishinari District, Tsumori Village
(All three facilities are located in Settsu Province.)

Kuzuha Shelter: Kono District, Kuzuha Village
Ishihara Shelter: Tanboku District, Arihara Village
(The two facilities are located in Kawachi Province.)

Ōtori Shelter: Ōtori District, Ōtori Village
Yachū Shelter: Ōtori District, Dobon Village
(These two final facilities are located in Izumi Province.)

GLOSSARY OF JAPANESE TERMS

Bosatsu the Japanese equivalent of "bodhisattva"; a being who sets out on the path to buddhahood for the sake of others; an extremely rare individual who postpones enlightenment to save all sentient beings; in Japan, sometimes used as an honorary title awarded to extraordinary monks.

Chishikidera a community of lay believers who were often led by Buddhist monks to perform good works for the salvation of others.

Dainihon hokkegenki abbreviated as *Hokke genki*; a collection of Buddhist biographies compiled by the Tendai monk, Chingen, between 1040 and 1044, many of which focus on monks who upheld the teaching of the *Lotus Sutra*.

Daisōjō the highest rank awarded to any Buddhist monk in Japan, Gyōki being the first monk to receive this honorary rank in 745.

Daisōjō sharibyōki the earliest biography of Gyōki carved onto his gravestone in 749 by his disciple, Shinsei.

Daosengge a set of Chinese regulations for Buddhist and Daoist monks that were carefully studied by the compilers of the Japanese *Soniryō* during the seventh century.

Dōkyō (?–772) a high-ranking monk who was favored by the Empress Shōtoku (764–770), tried to usurp the throne, and was exiled to Shimotsuke province.

Dōshō (629–700) the founder of the Hossō school in Japan; Gyōki's master before Gyōki devoted himself fully to his charitable activities.

Eison (1201–1290) a Risshū monk who was awarded the title of "bodhisattva" by several Kamakura emperors.

Fukuden a metaphor for a buddha or a bodhisattva who benefits those who worship him, just as a field yields crops.

Fuseya relief facilities that Gyōki built for the poor, the construction and maintenance of which by the Heian period were taken over by the local governors.

Genbaryō the bureau of alien and Buddhist affairs, the peculiar imperial office that kept an eye on the Buddhist monastic establishment by checking monastic registers and monitoring Buddhist monks and nuns who desired to participate in ascetic activities.

Gyōki bosatsuden an influential biography on Gyōki written at the beginning of the twelfth century; describes Gyōki's construction projects and his relation with the Nara court in more detail than that in earlier biographies.

Gyōki bosatsu engizu ekotoba abbreviated as *Engizu ekotoba*; the longest biography of Gyōki written in 1316 by Gyōkaku, the head priest of Ebara temple.

Gyōki nenpu the most comprehensive list of Gyōki's construction projects compiled by lzumi Kochi in the twelfth century.

Hossō shū one of the six schools of Nara Buddhism; founded by Dōshō after returning from his studies in China, with its main centres at Yakushi temple, Gangō temple, and Kōfuku temple.

Ikomayama chikurinji engi an account that describes how Gyōki's grave was rediscovered in the thirteenth century.

Jitō tennō (r. 690–697) the empress who reigned at the end of the Asuka period, moved the capital to Fujiwara-kyo, and encouraged the compilation of the *Ritsuryō* codes.

Jūshi a group of ten high-ranking monks appointed by the imperial court to monitor the behavior of unruly monks in 645; replaced by the central monastic office at the end of the seventh century.

Kokuchō a Buddhist vow permit issued by imperial authorities to keep track of the number of monks who were ordained yearly.

Kōmyōshi (701–760) the wife of Emperor Shōmu; active in building orphanages and other relief facilities for the poor.

Konjaku monogatari shū a late Heian collection of miscellaneous tales that included several volumes of accounts on Japanese Buddhist monks.

Kyaku regulations set up for interpreting and implementing penal regulations (*ritsu*); organized into a large body of supplementary regulations known as the *Kōnin kyaku* (820), *Jōgan kyaku* (869), and *Engi kyaku* (902).

Nihon ryōiki a Buddhist tale collection compiled by the Buddhist monk Kyōkai; narrated various mysterious events and happenings in Japan during the Asuka-Nara periods.

Nihon shoki the first of the six national histories that was completed in 720; begins with the reigns of the mythical emperors and moves all the way up to the death of Empress Jitō in 697.

Ōgishō one of the earliest poetic anthologies compiled by Fujiwara Kiyosuke between 1135 and 1144 to instruct aspiring poets; includes an interesting anecdote about Gyōki.

Ōjō gokurakuki the abbreviation of the *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki*; eleventh-century collection of Buddhist biographies; includes one of the most widely-read accounts of Gyōki.

Ryō no shūge a set of commentaries on the Yōrō codes completed in 868; contains some surviving passages originally missing from the Kiyomigahara and Taihō codes.

Sanbōe kotoba a collection of tales and short anecdotes compiled by Minamoto no Tamenori in 984 to instruct Princess Takako about the basic teachings of Buddhism.

Sangō Buddhist monastic officials appointed by the imperial court and required to report the activities of the local Buddhist monks and nuns.

Shaseki shū translated in earlier studies as *Sand and Pebbles*; a medieval Buddhist tale collection compiled by Mujū Ichien; includes an account of Gyōki that describes the bodhisattva's peculiar birth.

Shidosō a generic term often used for Buddhist monks and nuns who took vows without the permission from the central monastic office, the numbers of whom, despite warnings from the imperial court, continued to increase into the Heian period.

Shiki supplementary laws that helped to amplify the civil and religious regulations described in the *Ritsuryō* codes.

Shoku nihongi the official history of the Nara court completed in 797; narrates sociopolitical developments between the reigns of Emperor Monmu (r. 697–707) and Emperor Kanmu (r. 781–806).

Shōmu tennō (701–756) the emperor who revered Gyōki in his later years, received formal Buddhist vows, and led the country in the construction of the enormous Vairocana Buddha statue.

Sōgō translated in earlier studies as the "central monastic office"; the highest governing body of monastic officials established in the seventh century, with the primary responsibility of making sure that the *Sōniryō* were implemented in the capital and the provinces.

Sōniryō a set of Buddhist monastic regulations created by Nara officials at the beginning of the eighth century; intended to be the imperial court's control mechanism over Buddhist monks and nuns.

Tachibana no Moroe (684–757) the minister of the left when Gyōki was most active in his construction projects, with political influence that allowed the Vairocana Buddha campaign to progress smoothly.

Taihō ryō the seventeen-volume set of penal and administrative codes that were completed in 701; based on the Chinese Yonghui codes of the Tang dynasty and developed further in the Japanese Yōrō codes.

Taika no kaishin a series of political reforms initiated by Fujiwara Kamatari and his political allies in 645 to reduce the power of powerful clans (gōzoku) and to strengthen the authority of the imperial court.

Wonhyo (617–686) also known as *Gangyō* in Japanese; a Korean monk believed by some scholars to have inspired Gyōki's charitable activities and, according to some texts, dressing like a layperson and entering bars to spread Buddhist teachings.

Yōrō ryō the twenty-volume set of penal and administrative codes that were completed in 718, most effectively implemented during the latter part of the eighth century.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1 Kenneth Woodward, *Making Saints* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 15–16.
2 Richard Kieckhefer and George D. Bond, *Sainthood: Its Manifestations in World Religions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 247–8.
3 Fukuoka Takashi, "Gyōki kenkyū nōto." *Nihon fukushidaigaku kenkyūkiyō Vol.* 36 (Nagoya: Isseisha, 1978), 55–70.
4 Futaba Kenkō, *Nihon kodai bukkyōshi no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō 1984), 185–235. Sakuma Ryū, "Kansō ni tsuite," Asaeda Zenshō, ed., *Ritsuryō kokka to bukkyō* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1994), 183–8. Naobayashi Futai, *Nihon kodai bukkyō seidoshi kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1988), 227–63. Matsuo Kenji, *Kamkura shinbukkyō no tanjō* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1995), 20–8.
5 Naobayashi, 1988: 343–8, 376–8. The *sōgō* was the highest ranking monastic council composed of three to five Buddhist monks during the Nara period. Their specific responsibilities included punishing monks who had committed the most serious crimes, overseeing group ordinations, and granting special permission for monks to engage in mountain asceticism and other special activities. The *sangō* were responsible for reporting monastic activities in the provinces to the *sōgō* and the council of state.
6 Richard A. Hutch, *The Meaning of Lives: Biography, Autobiography, and the Spiritual Quest* (London: Cassell, 1997), 97.
7 David Jeffrey, ed., *A Dictionary of Bibilical Tradition in English Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1992), 130–1.
8 Carter Linderg, *Beyond Charity, Reformation Initiatives for the Poor* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 27–8.
9 Catherine Lis and Hugo Soly, *Poverty and Capitalism in Pre-industrial Europe* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1979), 22.
10 Matsushige Ikuo and Arimura Nozomu, eds, *Kamagasaki rekishi to genzai* (Tokyo: Mitsui Shobō, 1993), 115–25.
11 See Chapter 3 for a discussion about the reliability of this text, which was compiled by Izumi Kochi during the twelfth century.
12 Shinsei, "Daisōjō sharibyōki," Inoue Kaoru, ed., *Gyōkisan wo kangaeru* (Osaka: Sakai Gyōki no Kai, 1998), 28.
13 Margaret Helen Childs, *Rethinking Sorrow: Revelatory Tales of Late Medieval Japan* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1991), 14–16.

14 Enoki Mukairyō Kaihatsu Kyōgikai, ed., *Gyōki bosatsu to kōsenji* (Osaka: Daisan Insatsu Kabushiki Gaisha, 1995), 24–7.
15 See Chart 0.1 for a more complete list of the primary sources.
16 Chiyoda, 1994: 176–211.
17 Inoue Mitsusada, "Gyōki nenpu: tokuni tempyō jūsannenki no kenkyū," Hiraoka Jōkai and Nakai Shinkō, eds, *Gyōki ganjin* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1983), 96.

1 THE RECEIVED BIOGRAPHY OF GYŌKI

1 Inoue Kaoru, *Gyōki*. (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1959). See Chapter 2 for historical significance.
2 Nomura Tadao, "Gyōki," Hiraoka Jōkai and Nakai Shinkō, eds, *Gyōki ganjin* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1983), 65–8.
3 Miyagi Yōichirō, *Nihon kodai bukkyō undōshi kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1985), 223–4.
4 Yoshida Yasuo, *Gyōki to ritsuryō kokka* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1987), 59–82. Also see Yoshida's *Nihon kodai no bosatsu to minshū* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan: 1988).
5 Nakai Shinkō, *Gyōki to kodai bukkyō* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1991). Also see Nakai's "Bosatsu gyō to shakai jigyō" in Murakami Shigeyoshi, ed., *Nihonjin to bukkyo* 10 (Tokyo: Shunchō Sha, 1988), 60–8.
6 The most notable work is Nakai Shinkō, *Nihon kodai no bukkyō to minshū* (Tokyo: Hyōronsha, 1973), 148–9.
7 Joan Piggott, *Todaiji and the Nara Imperium* (Michigan: Dissertation Information Service, 1987), 267–73. Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 167–235, 236–83.
8 Abe Ryūichi, *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 78–80.
9 *Ibid*., 4.
10 After Gyōki was promoted to the *daisōjō* in 745, he became associated with Yakushi temple, because this was where the monks of the *sōgō* (central monastic office) were supposed to conduct their official business. However, as Inoue Kaoru pointed out, Gyōki was probably busy directing the construction of relief facilities during this period, so it is unlikely that he resided in Yakushi temple for long. Inoue Kaoru, 1997: 281.
11 Yoshida Yasuo explained that various members of the Hachita clan are listed in the *Shinsen shōjiroku* (825) as middle-rank officials. Yoshida, 1987: 15.
12 Kyōkai states that Gyōki was born in Kubiki district, Echigo province in tale I-7 of the *Nihon ryōiki*. This ninth century text is less reliable because several important dates such as Gyōki's appointment to the *daisōjō* are off by several years.
13 This confusing statement may refer to the imperial edict of 731 that allowed some of the laymen and laywomen (*ubasoku* and *ubai*, respectively) who worked with Gyōki to be ordained. However, the wording also suggests that the Nara court granted some people the permission to become Gyōki's disciples.
14 An allusion to the Shakyamuni Buddha who passed away on his right side.

15 A fully annotated version of Shinsei's *Daisōjō sharibyōki* is included in Inoue Kaoru's "Gyōki boshi," Inoue Kaoru, ed., *Gyōki jiten* (Tokyo: Kokusha Kankōkai, 1997), 278–9.
16 Gyōki's birthplace is located in Sakai city Handa-chō.
17 Inoue Kaoru, 1997: 13.
18 *Ibid*., 14.
19 Sakamoto Tarō, ed., *Nihon shoki* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1995). Future references to the *Nihon shoki* will refer to the Iwanami edition.
20 Inoue Kaoru 1997: 14–15.
21 *Ibid*., 278–9.
22 Piggott, 1997: 219.
23 Wakai Toshiaki, "Tokudo to jukkai," Inoue Kaoru ed., *Gyōki jiten* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kangyōkan, 1997), 39.
24 Inoue Kaoru, 1997: 278.
25 The two-hundred fifty precepts that a *biku* should follow. Skt. upsampadā.
26 *Tokudo* can mean the attainment enlightenment, but generally speaking it refers to the entrance into the priesthood.
27 *Shoku nihongi* 01/01/720.
28 Wakai Toshiaki, "Tokudo to Jukkai," Inoue Kaoru ed., *Gyōki jiten* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kangyōkan, 1997), 43.
29 Ōta Toshirō, *Zoku Gunsho Ruiju* 204 (Tokyo: Taiheiyō Daigo Kōjō, 1927), 439–41.
30 Suzuki Keiji, "Gyōki nenpu," Inoue Kaoru, ed., *Gyōki jiten* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kangyōkai, 1997), 258.
31 *Shoku nihongi* 11/734.
32 Nakai, 1973: 115–16.
33 Tamura Enchō, "Setsuronshū no denrai," Hayami Tasuku, ed., *Nara bukkyō no tenkai* (Tokyo: Yuzankaku, 1994), 92–112.
34 Yoshida Yasuo, 1987: 161–2.
35 Inoue Kaoru, 1959: 44–50.
36 Tatsukawa Seiji, ed., *Ryō no shūge shakugi* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1982), 195–196.
37 Nemoto Seiji, *Nara bukkyō to gyōki denshō no tenkai* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku 1991), 147–50. Nakai 1973: 5658.
38 *Ibid.,* 82–4.
39 Yoshida Yasuo, "Gyōki no shinkōshisō no haikei to shoi no keiten," Inoue Kaoru, ed., *Gyōki jiten* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1997), 160–1.
40 *Ibid.,* 168.
41 Inoue Mitsusada, 1983: 99–106.
42 See Nakada Norio's *Shinpen nihon koten bungaku zenshū* edition.

2 THE BODHISATTVA TRADITION AND THE HAGIOGRAPHER'S CRAFT

1 Richard A. Hutch, *The Meaning of Lives: Biography, Autobiography, and the Spiritual Quest* (London: Cassell, 1997), 97.
2 Kenneth Woodward, *Making Saints* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 18.
3 Pamela Gehrke, *Saints and Scribes: Medieval Hagiography in its Manuscript Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 1–15.

4 Hasegawa Hideki, ed., *Nihon no koten meicho* (Tokyo: Jiyūkokumin Sha, 1994), 345–6.
5 Donald S. Lopez Jr., "Sanctificaton on the Bodhisattva Path," Richard Kieckhefer and George D. Bond, eds, *Sainthood: Its Manifestations in World Religions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 182.
6 *Ibid.,* 183–4.
7 Lopez Jr., 1988: 205.
8 Namikawa, 1979: 112.
9 Inoue Kaoru, 1998: 22–3.
10 Yoshida Yasuo, 1998: 16–18.
11 Ōta Tōshirō, ed., *Zoku gunsho ruijū* 204 (Tokyo: Taiheiyō Daigokōjō), 489–41.
12 Umehara Suesada, "Gyōki sharibyōki ni mietaru sono shoshi to sono kyōnen ni tsuite," *Kōkogaku zasshi* Vol. 5(12): 1915, 21–34.
13 Jakumetsu, "Ikomayama chikurinji engi," *Dainihon bukkyō zensho Vol. 85* (Tokyo: The Suzuki Research Foundation, 1972), 263. See Chapter 7 for a more detailed of the *Chikurinji engi*.
14 Piggott, 1997: 290–2.
15 Inaoka Kōji, "Shoku nihongi ni okeru senmyō," Aoki Kazuo, ed., *Shoku nihongi* II (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1990), 672–88, 700–2.
16 The *Nihon ryōiki* is made up of three separate volumes. The Roman numerals indicate the volume numbers.
17 Nakagawa Osamu, "Gyōkiden no keisei to minshū no gyōki sūhai," Futaba Kenkō, ed., *Minshū to bukkyō* (Kyoto, Nagata Bunshōdō, 1984), 125–30.
18 To avoid confusion, readers are encouraged to read the translations of tales and hagiography in the appendix before reading the analysis.
19 Future references to this text will be abbreviated *Ōjō gokurakuki*. Fukuoka Takashi, "Gyōkiden no keisei," *Nihon fukushi daigaku kenkyū kiyō Vol. 38* (1979), 216–19.
20 *Ibid.,* 219–21.
21 Yoneyama, 1994: 31–5.
22 Ōta, 1927: 489–91.
23 Chiyoda Izuru, "Shijūku-in wa dokoka," Inoue Kaoru, ed., *Gyōki jiten* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1997), 230–233.
24 Inoue Mitsusada, 1983: 96.
25 *Ibid*., 90.
26 *Ibid.,* 91–4.
27 Ōnodera was one of the earliest practice halls that Gyōki constructed. It also included a pagoda that was nine meters high and fifty-two meters wide on one side.
28 Yoshida Yasuo, "Gyōki nenpu no nendaiki to hakkutsu chōsa," Inoue Kaoru, ed., *Gyōkisan wo kangaeru* (Sakai: Sakai Gyōki no kai, 1998), 16–17.

3 GYŌKI AND THE *SŌNIRYŌ*

1 Yoshida Yasuo, 1987: 128–32.
2 Aoki Kazuo, ed., *Shoku nihongi* II. [Shin nihon koten bungaku taikei] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1990), 27. All the articles and commentaries of the *Sōniryō* are contained in Tatsukawa Seiji, ed., *Ryō no shūge shakugi*. (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1982), 183–228. The following table is a list

of the *Soniryō* articles that Gyōki and his followers violated and the punishments that they deserved for their crimes.

3 Note that the crimes of Gyōki and his followers are abbreviated in this table. See the 717 entry from the *Shoku nihongi* for a more detailed description.
4 Tatsukawa, 1982: 195–6.
5 The *Ryō no shūge* includes five ninth-century commentators who interpreted the *Sōniryō*. Little is known about the commentators other than their familiarity with all the laws of the *Ritsuryō*. According to the *Ketsu* commentator of the *Sōniryō*, the phrase "to falsely claim that there is profit in crime" meant promoting texts that were outside the established Buddhist canon, such as the *Brahma Sutra* (*Fantian jing*). Yoshida Yasuo, *Gyōki to ritsuryō kokka* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1987), 118.
6 Tatsukawa, 1982: 195.
7 Yoshida, 1987: 108–11.
8 Tatsukawa, 1982: 191–2.
9 *Ibid*., 112.
10 Despite Gihō's laicization, his relations with the imperial court seemed to have been pretty good, as he was granted the fifth-rank junior grade later in his life, and his poems appear in the first imperially sponsored Chinese poetry anthology, the *Kaifūsō*.
11 Yoshida Yasuo, 1987: 111–12.
12 Tatsukawa, 1982: 196–7.
13 *Ibid*., 197.
14 Tatsukawa, 1982: 194.
15 Nakai, 1973: 61–2 and Yoshida Yasuo, 1987: 148.
16 The *handen* system was not implemented on a wide scale until the completion of the Taihō codes, but its foundations had been laid during the Taika reforms of 645 and were already being enforced on a limited scale during Tenmu's reign.
17 Tatsukawa, 1982: 211–12.
18 *Ibid*., 223.
19 Yoshida Yasuo, 1987: 107.
20 Futaba Kenkō, "Sōniryō no sengyōhō to shiteno dōsōkyaku," Asaeda Zenshō, ed., *Ritsuryō kokka to bukkyō* (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1994), 65–6.
21 The *Tanglushuyi* contains regulations against instructing laypeople and wearing ostentatious colors. The wording of these regulations closely resembles that of article 10 and 23 of the Japanese *Sōniryō*. Futaba, 1994: 66–7.
22 Michihata Ryōshū, *Tōdai bukkyoshi no kenkyū* (Tokyō: Hōzōkan, 1957), 133–4.
23 Piggott, 1987: 33.
24 Hirakawa Akira, *Nihon bukkyo to chūgoku bukkyo* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1991), 214–15.
25 According to the *Ryō no shūge* and *Seiji yūryaku*, at least two versions of the *Daosengge* existed. Fujiwara no Suketoki brought the earliest version back to Japan in 635. Umeda Yoshihiko argued that the Japanese *Sōniryō* was based on a later version of the *Daosengge*, which was finished during Emperor Gaozong's reign. Unlike the earlier *Daosengge*, the later version seems to have combined secular regulations with parts of the *vinaya.* See

Umeda Yoshihiko's *Nihon shūkyō seidoshi Vol. 1* (Tokyo: Sankidō, 1971), 226–7.

26 Nakai Shinkō, "Sōniryō no hōteki kigen," Asaeda Zenshō, ed., *Ritsuryō kokka to bukkyō* (Tokyo: Yūzan Kaku, 1994), 83.

27 *Ibid*., 84.

28 Tatsukawa, 1982: 226.

29 *Ibid*., 214.

30 *Ibid*., 197.

31 The translation of these titles was taken from Piggott, 1987: 175.

32 See *Soniryō* article 11 and 15. Tatsukawa 1982: 203 and 209. This work contains all the articles of the *Sōniryō* along with the various Heian commentaries. See pages 183–228 for specific regulations of the *Sōniryō*.

33 Several days later, the position of the chief of the law (*hōtō*) was added to the two highest positions. This position was filled by a layperson.

34 Nakai, 1994: 85–9.

35 Tatsukawa, 1982: 203–4 and 213.

36 *Ibid*., 209.

37 *Ibid*., 195.

38 Tatsukawa, 1982: 216–17.

39 *Ibid*., 215–19.

40 Nakai, 1973: 58.

41 Tatsukawa, 1982: 215.

42 Enforcing the system of requiring all ordained monks to carry vow permits seemed to have been difficult, because Emperor Shōmu was already complaining about the number of frauds in the 08/720 entry of the *Shoku nihongi*. After this incident, the court required only the highest-ranking monks to carry vow permits.

43 Joan Piggott, 1997: 217.

44 Tamura Enchō, *Nihon bukkyōshi Vol. 1* (Tokyo: Hōzōkan, 1982), 158–62.

45 These regulations are listed in article 5 and 13 of the *Sōniryō*.

46 Tamura, 1982: 146.

47 Tatsukawa, 1982: 207–8.

48 Moroto Tatsuo, "Sōniryō ni arawareta sōgō ni tsuite," *Shūdai shigaku* Vol. 9 (1960): 25.

49 Inoue Mitsusada, *Nihon kodai kokka no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1967), 341–4.

50 Naobayashi Futai, "Sōniryō no sōgō kankei jōbun," Asaeda Zenshō, ed., *Ritsuryō kokka to bukkyo* (Tokyo: Yuzankaku, 1994), 103–4.

51 Tatsukawa, 1982: 114–15.

52 *Ibid*., 108–13 and Naobayashi 1988: 343–8.

53 Nakai, 1991: 94.

54 The *Ryuijū sandai kyaku* records that a monk of Gangōji turned in several unordained monks in 06/759, but the unordained monks got away with verbal warnings.

55 Kimu Tarusu, *Gyōki no jidai* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1982), 312–13.

56 Tamura Enchō, *Kodai chōsen bukkyō to nihon bukkyō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1980), 23–5. The Hōsso sect was introduced by Silla monks along with translations of important texts, such as the *Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom* (*Dabanruo jing*).

57 Kimu, 1982: 54–6; 312–16.

58 Miyagi, 1985: 320.
59 Nakamura Takao, "Gyōki to kodai tennōsei," *Nara jidai no sōryo to shakai* (Tokyo: Yuzankaku, 1994), 245–52.
60 Hōjō Katsutaka, "Gyōki to gijutsusha shūdan," Inoue Kaoru, ed., *Gyōki jiten* (Tokyo: Kokusha Kankōkai, 1997), 112–24.

4 GYŌKI AND THE POLITICS OF THE NARA COURT

1 Miyagi Yōichirō, 1997: 67–82. Inoue Mitsusada, "Gyōki nenpu tokuni tempyō jūsannenki no kenkyū," Nakai Shinkō and Hiraoka Jōkai, eds, (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1983), 99–106.
2 Half the members of the council of state died in the 737 epidemic, and Fujiwara Hirotsugu sent an army against Nara in 740.
3 Yoshimura Takehiko, *Nihon kodai shakai to kokka* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1996), 2.
4 The primary function of these supplementary regulations, such as the *Jōgan kyaku* (869) and *Engi shiki* (927), seems to have been to adapt Chinese penal and administrative laws to the Japanese setting, so that the *Ritsuryō* could become more functional.
5 Felicia Bock, *Engi-Shiki: Procedures of the Engi Era* (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1970), 8–13.
6 Inoue Mitsusada, "The Century of Reform," Delmer Brown, ed., *The Cambridge History of Japan Vol. 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 209–10.
7 Bruce Batten, "Foreign Threat and Domestic Reform," *Monumenta Nipponica* 41(2) 216–17.
8 William Farris, *Population, Disease, and Land in Early Japan, 645–900* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1985), 128–31, 138–9.
9 The compilation and the significance of this work are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3. Although the text was compiled at the end of the Heian period, it was based on charts and texts that date back to the Nara period.
10 The Heijō capital was begun in 708, but the construction continued for several years even after the emperor moved to Nara in 03/03/710.
11 Inoue Mitsusada, ed., *Ritsuryō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1976), 249–52. Articles 1–4 of Volume 10 (Tax and Labor Laws) give further details about these requirements.
12 Murayama Shūichi and Kishi Toshio, ed., *Nihonshi jiten* (Tokyo: Sūken Shuppan, 1991), 180.
13 Oda Shōko, *Jōsei no tame no kodaishi* (Tokyo: Tōkisha, 1980), 170–8, 200–8.
14 Inoue Kaoru 1959: 45–7.
15 Tamura Enchō, "Gyōki to shiragi bukkyō," *Kodaichōsen bukkyō to nihon bukkyō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1980), 184.
16 See Dōji's biography in the *Shoku Nihongi* 10(2), 745 for specific information.
17 Inoue Kaoru, *Gyōki* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1969), 28–9.
18 Kyōkai, *Nihon ryōiki* (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1996), 70. Kōen, "Fusōryakki,"*Kokushi taikei Vol. 6.* Mochizuki Jirō, ed. (Tokyo: Keizai Zasshisha, 1897), 563–7.
19 Inoue Kaoru, 1997: 19–20.
20 Miyagi Yōichirō, 1997: 74.

21 Kishi Toshio, *Nihon kodai seijishi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kōshobō, 1966), 202–18.
22 Yoshida Yasuo, 1987: 273.
23 Inoue Kaoru, 1969: 79.
24 Hongō, 1993: 52–53.
25 The Suzuki Research Foundation, ed., "Kōfukuji ryūgi," *Dainihon bukkyō zenshū Vol. 84* (Tokyō: Kōdansha, 1972), 295–6.
26 The *Manyōshū* (Vol. 3: poem 312) lists a poem that Muchimaro composed while he was stationed at Namba.
27 Yoshida Yasuo, 1987: 217–18.
28 Tsuruoka Shizuo, "Kodai ni okeru daihannya kyō eno ikyo," *Kodai bukkyōshi kenkyū* (Tokyō: Bunyadō, 1965), 12–13.
29 Farris, 1985: 65.
30 Kimu Tarusu, 1982: 349
31 Nomura Tadao, "Nara jidai no seiji katei," *Nihon rekishi* 3. Aoki Kazuo, ed. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1980), 88.
32 Ueda Masaaki, *Daibutsu kaigan* (Tokyo: Buneidō, 1968), 216–17.
33 The civil war that occurred over the imperial succession of Emperor Tenji.
34 *Ibid*., 155–7, 218–23.
35 Nomura Tadao, 1980: 89–92.
36 Piggott, 1987: 56.
37 Takinami Sadako, *Nihon kodai gūteishakai no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Shinbunkaku, 1991), 38–9.
38 Tanoi Yasuko, "Nihon kodai sentoron kunikyō wo megutte," *Narashien* 27, 3–8.
39 Takinami, 1991: 42
40 Suzuki, 1997: 261–5.
41 Kawasaki Yōichi, "Daibutsu kaigan no mondai o megutte," *Kikimanyō no sekai*. Kawasaki Yōichi, ed. (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppan Kai, 1982), 443.
42 Yoshida Yasuo, 1987: 240–2.
43 Inoue Kaoru, 1959: 121.
44 For a more thorough discussion on the concept of the *chishiki*, refer to "Charitable projects before Gyōki" in Chapter 2.
45 Piggott, 1997: 260.
46 The New Fields Law did not authorize unlimited land clearance but restricted the amount of land a person could clear depending on his social status. Farris 1985: 80.
47 Piggott 1997: 257–62.
48 Akamatsu Toshihide, ed., *Gukanshō* [Nihon koten bungaku zenshū 84] (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1967), 144. Inoue Kaoru 1959: 95–6.
49 Takinami, 1991: 44–7.
50 Inoue Kaoru, 1959: 121.
51 Futaba Kenkō, *Kodai bukkyō shisōshi kenkyū* (Kyōto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1962), 510.
52 Kimu, 1982: 382.
53 Kawasaki Tsuneyuki, "Nara bukkyō no seiritsu to hōkai," *Gyōki ganjin*. Hiraoka Jōkai, ed. (Tokyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1983), 22–4.
54 Nakagawa Osamu, "Kodai ni okeru shisōshutai keisei no mondai," *Bukkyō shigaku kenkyū Vol. 18* (Kyoto: Dōhōsha, 1976), 68.

55 Yokota Kenichi, *Hakuhōtenpyō no sekai* (Osaka: Sōgensha, 1973), 399–405.

5 GYŌKI'S CHARITABLE PROJECTS

1 Yoshida Yasuo, *Nihon kodai no bosatsu to minshū* (Tokyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1988), 44–59. Nakai Shinkō 1988: 55–62.
2 *Ibid*., 70–2.
3 Yoshida Yasuo, 1997: 163–7.
4 Yabuki Keiki, *Sankai kyō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shōten, 1927), 638–9.
5 Yoshida, 1988: 44–5.
6 Yoshida Yasuo, 1997: 164.
7 This quote is taken from a passage in the *Tuigen qixing fa*, which can be found in Yabuki Yoshiki's *Sankai kyō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1927), 16.
8 Yoshida Yasuo, 1997: 167.
9 *Ibid.*, 160–3.
10 Yoshida Yasuo 1988: 58–9.
11 Three Stages texts encouraged monks to interact with the masses, whereas the *Sōniryō* strictly forbade monks from gathering outside temples and instructing lay people.
12 Miyagi Yōichirō, "Minshū no kyūsai dendō no hōhō to purosesu." *Gyōki jiten* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1997), 172.
13 *Dazhidulun* 12, T 1508. 25:147a, 23–8.
14 Miyagi, 1997: 173.
15 Miyagi Yōichrō, *Nihon kodai bukkyō undōshi kenkyū* (Kyoto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1985), 202.
16 Yoshida Yasuo, 1987: 37–9.
17 Dōshō is known as the first monk in Japan who was cremated before burial. Nakao Takashi and Imai Masaharu, *Nihon meisō jiten* (Tokyo: Tokyodō, 1976), 141–2. See 03/03/700 in the *Shoku nihongi* for his official biography.
18 Takeuchi Rizō ed., *Nara ibun gekan* (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō, 1962), 962.
19 Kimu Tarusu, 1982: 46–7.
20 Nakai Shinkō, "Bosatsu gyō to shakai jigyō," Murakami Shigeyoshi, ed., *Nihonjin to bukkyo 10* (Tokyo: Shunchō Sha, 1988), 44–6.
21 *Nihon shoki*, 01/693.
22 *Shoku nihongi*, 08/767.
23 *Ichijō no gyō* refers to spiritual practices, such as charity and meditation, that are supposed to lead people to enlightenment.
24 The three benefits are the so-called *shujukudatsu*: "seed" (*shu*), "ripening" (*juku*), and "liberation" (*datsu*).
25 The author of this text perceives a bridge as an expedient means toward spiritual enlightenment.
26 Nakai, 1988: 60.
27 Nakai, 1991: 16–17.
28 Janet Goodwin, *Alms and Vagabonds* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 22.
29 Inoue Kaoru, 1959: 112.
30 Suzuki Keiji, "Gyōki botsugo no deshira no dōkō," *Gyōkisan wo kangaeru.*

Sakai Gyōki no kai (Osaka: Sakaishi hakubutsu kan, 1997), 4–6.
31 Suzuki Keiji, 1997: 272.
32 Mochizuki Jirō, ed., *Kokushi taikei Vol. 6* (Tokyo: Keizai Zasshisha, 1897), 565.
33 *Tōdaiji yōroku*, 02/754: Vol. 1, 16.
34 *Nara ibun Vol. 2*: 970. For further discussion on Gyōki's grave, see Chapter 6.
35 *Tōdaiji Yōroku Vol. 2*: 46–7 (03/21/752).
36 Ishimura Kiei, *Nihon kodai bukkyō bunkashi ronkō* (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1987), 313.
37 *Dainihon komonjo Vol. 3*: 328–34. The temple is also called Chōchi temple in the *Gyōki Nenpu*.
38 Inoue Mitsusada, *Nihon kodai no kokka to bukkyō* (Tokyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1971), 100–1.
39 *Kenkairon* a, T 2378. 74: 593c, 24–5.
40 Nakai, 1988: 62.
41 *Ruijū sandai kyaku Vol. 16*, 6/835.
42 Nakai, 1988: 63.
43 *Shoku nihon kōki*, 5/833.
44 *Ruijū sandai kyaku*, 08/848.
45 A good example is the *zokumyō-in*, which was built by a Dazai official. *Shoku nihon kōki*, 12/835. After this charitable facility was completed, a lecturer from Kanzeon temple took charge of it. Hashikawa Tadashi, *Nihon bukkyō to shakai jigyō* (Tokyo: Heigo Shuppan, 1925), 36–64.
46 Nakai, 1988: 68.
47 Takeuchi Rizō, ed., *Heian ibun: konseki hen* (Tokyo: Tokyodō, 1960), 94.

6 GYŌKI AND FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN BUDDHIST HAGIOGRAPHY

1 Inoue Mitsusada, "The Century of Reform," *Cambridge History of Japan* Vol. 1. Delmer Brown, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 180–206.
2 Seki Akira, *Kikajin.* (Tokyo: Shinbundō, 1956), 138–58.
3 Inoue Kaoru, "Gyōki no shōgai," *Gyōki jiten*. Inoue Kaoru, ed. (Tokyo: Kokusho Kangyō Kan, 1997), 12–13.
4 Ōtori district corresponds with present day Sakai city Osaka.
5 Kimu 1982: 16–17.
6 Yoneyama Takako, *Gyōk setsuwa no seisei to tenkai* (Tokyo: Benseisha, 1996), 7.
7 The motif of abandoning the deformed child appears in the *Kojiki*. When Izanami and Izanagi gave birth to a "leech child," it could not walk, so they put him in a boat that drifted down to the ocean.
8 Yoneyama, 1996: 7–10, 23.
9 See the "Kami no ki" entry in Ishigami Kataji's *Nihon minzokugo daijiten* (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1981).
10 Yoneyama, 1996: 10–11.
11 This is a spell given in the *Shuryōgon-kyō*, which consists of 427 phrases. It was believed to be effective in warding off evil deities and curing illnesses.
12 Kimu, 1982: 15.

13 Suzuki Keiji, "Gyōki nenpu," Inoue Kaoru ed., *Gyōki jiten* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1997), 252–4.
14 Ōsone Shōkai and Kubota Jun, eds, *Kenkyū shiryō nihonkoten bungaku 3.* (Tokyo: Meijishoin, 1984), 11–14.
15 The monk Dōshō, of Gangō temple, and Prince Shōtoku appear in only two tales.
16 William R. LaFleur, *The Karma of Words* (Berekeley: University of California Press, 1983), 155.
17 Yoneyama, 1996: 54–5. I am greatly indebted to the first two chapters of Yoneyama's book for helping me to locate the most important hagiography and tales, but I fundamentally disagree with her approach, which assumes that the later Gyōki hagiographies are no longer concerned with his actual accomplishments during the Nara period.
18 Maruyama Akinori, *Nihon ryōiki setsuwa no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Ōfūsha, 1992), 124–9.
19 *Ibid*., 82–6.
20 For a further discussion on human sacrifices that were made along this river, see Takagi Yasuo's "Jinshin onkyōron," *Kyōdo kenkyu,* August (1913), 23–40.
21 The ability to read other people's thoughts is called *tashinriki* according to the *Dazhidulun*. Yoneyama, 1994: 55.
22 Asaeda Shōkō, "Gyōki bukkyō no tenkai," *Heianshoki bukkyoshi kenkyū* (Kyōto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1980), 128–9.
23 Nakagawa Osamu, "Gyōkiden no seritsu to minshū no Gyōki sūhai," *Minshū to bukkyō*, Futaba Kenkō, ed. (Kyōto: Nagata Bunshōdō, 1984), 124–5.
24 A karmic bond among believers united under a common spiritual goal.
25 Frederic J. Kotas, "Ōjōden: Accounts of Rebirth in the Pure Land" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1987), 302–4.
26 *Ibid*., 305
27 Tada Isshin, 1984: 23–6.
28 Fukuoka Takeshi, "Gyōkiden no keisei," *Nihon fukushi daigaku kenkyū kiyō Vol. 38–9* (Nagoya: Isseisha, 1979), 215–16.
29 Mt. Ryōjusen (Volture Peak) is where the Shakyamuni Buddha is said to have expounded on many sutras.
30 The name of the kingdom in which the Siddhartha Gautama was born.
31 Takenaka Shinobu, "Nantenjiku baramon sōjōhihei to kōsōden," *Suimon Vol. 15*, November, 1988, 23.
32 The date mentioned in the *Nantejiku baramon sōjōhi* (736) is reliable because it corresponds with the date in which the envoy fleet finally returned to Japan after repeated disasters. Seki Akira, "Chūgoku bukkyō to nara bukkyō," *Nara bukkyō to higashi ajia*, Nakai Shinkō, ed. (Tokyō: Yūzankaku, 1995), 54–7.
33 Tsutsui Eishun, ed., *Tōdaiji yōroku* (Tokyo: Zenkoku Shobō, 1944), 54–7.
34 Horiike Harumine, *Nanto bukkyōshi no kenkyū Vol. 1* (Tokyo: Hōzōkan, 1980), 17–28.
35 The original scrolls can be found at Ebaraji in Osaka (195 cm by 81cm each). Unfortunately a reproduction that allows one to see the images clearly has not been published.
36 Enoki Mukairyō Kaihatsu Kyōgikai, ed., *Gyōkibosatsu to kōsenji* (Osaka: Daisaninsatsu Kabushiki Gaisha, 1995), 24–7.

37 Emperor Ōjin is thought to be the fifteenth emperor of Yamato. His exact dates are not available since there is not enough historically verifiable evidence.
38 Other commentaries attributed to Chikō include the *Hannya shingyō jutsugi*, the *Chūronshu jutsugi*, and the *Hokke genron ryakujutsu*.
39 Gizen, "Sangoku buppō dentsū engi," *Dainihon bukkyō zensho Vol. 85*, Suzuki Research Foundation, ed. (Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation, 1972), 7–8.
40 Yoneyama, 1996: 92.
41 Iwasaki Takakazu, "Gangōjisō chikō no setsuwa ni tsuite," *Yamato bunka kenkyū* (Tokyo: Tenrijihōsha, 1966), 583–618.
42 Yoshishige no Yasutane may have omitted the description of Chikō's background, because he appears as the main character in the later half of the *Ōjō gokurakuki*. Yoneyama, 1996: 95–97.
43 *Ibid*., 103.
44 *Ibid*., 104–8.
45 Saeki Etatsu argued that poem 1732 of the *Manyōshū* describes the wandering life of Gyōki and his followers (*The mist trailing over the evening mountain at Oba, there is no port for my ship to enter*). Saeki argues that Gyōki may have been able to get his poem included in the *Manyōshū* during the years in which he served on the Vairocana Buddha campaign committee. Saeki Etatsu, *Manyōshū to bukkyō shisō* (Tokyo: Kōmyaku sha, 1992), 192.
46 Yoneyama, 1996: 154–5.
47 Jakumetsu, "Ikomayama chikurinji engi," *Dainihon bukkyō zensho Vol. 85* (Tokyo: The Suzuki Research Foundation, 1972), 263.
48 Umehara Suesada, "Gyōki sharibyōki ni mietaru sono shōshi to kyōnen ni tsuite," *Kōkogaku zasshi Vol. 5–12*, 1915, 21–34.
49 A similar account of the discovery also appears in Kahō's "Gyōki bosatsu onkotsu shutsugenki," Ōta Tōshirō, ed., *Zoku gunsho ruijū Vol. 204* (Tokyo: Taiyōsha, 1927), 451–2.
50 Ginen, "Chikurinji Ryakuroku," *Dainihon bukky*ō *zensho Vol. 85* (Tokyo: The Suzuki Research Fundation, 1972), 265.

CONCLUSION

1 Tamura Kōsuke, "Risshū no bosatsu," Kitaoka Hidetomo, ed., *Daijō bosatsu no sekai* (Tokyo: Kōsei Shuppan Sha, 1988), 331–3.
2 *Ibid*., 332–3. Nishida Nagao, "Kami no bosatsugō," Nishi Yoshio, ed., *Bosatsu shisō* (Tokyo: Daitō Shuppansha, 1981), 523–4.
3 These include the *Nihon ryōiki*, *Nihon kanreiroku*, *Nihon ōjō gokurakuki*, and *Dainihonkoku hokkegenki*, just to name a few.
4 Nakai Shinkō 1973: 148–51.
5 Tsuruoka Shizuo, *Tera to bukkyō* (Tokyo: Keisuisha, 1991), 81–124.

APPENDIX

1 Although the poem can be taken as an insult, it may express Gyōki's grief.
2 According to Izumoji Osamu, who annotated the Iwanami edition of the *Nihon ryōiki*, those who consumed the food of hell were believed to suffer

serious consequences. Perhaps it was thought to prevent one from being reborn again.

3 The phrase *manoatari tsukamatsuru* that Gyōki uses was generally reserved for lower-ranking persons when addressing their superiors. The narrator highlights Gyōki's moral superiority by having him humble himself to the person who insulted him.

4 These include a promise to abstain from sexual intercourse, killing living creatures, alcohol, theft, and slandering the Buddha's name.

5 The six realms include the realm of hell, hungry ghosts, animals, *ashuras*, men, and heavenly beings.

6 A mystical phrase often associated with esoteric Buddhism.

7 The kingdom of Siddhartha Guatama's birth.

8 Unfortunately, this text has not survived.

9 1 *jō* is approximately 313 cm.

10 1 *shaku* is approximately 33 cm.

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